

DAVE GIBBONS • RALPH REESE • DANIEL TORRES

THE RAY BRADBURY

CHRONICLES

2



The Authorized Adaptations

JENSEN
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THE RAY BRADBURY CHRONICLES
THE AUTHORIZED ADAPTATIONS

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THE **RAY**
BRADBURY
CHRONICLES

VOLUME TWO

A BYRON PREISS BOOK



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The Ray Bradbury Chronicles: Volume Two

A Bantam Spectra Book / July 1992

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For information address: Byron Preiss Visual Publications, Inc.

24 West 25th Street, New York N.Y. 10010

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bradbury, Ray. 1920-

The Ray Bradbury Chronicles / Ray Bradbury.

ISBN 0-553-35126-5

1. Bradbury, Ray. 1920 - Adaptations. 2. Science fiction comic book, strips, etc.
3. Horror comic books, strips, etc. I. Title. PN6727. B7R38 1992 741.5'973--dc20 92-2979 CIP

Published simultaneously in the United States and Canada.

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Printed in the U. S. A.

0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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INTRODUCTION

LITTLE DID I know when I was nine and ten and eleven years old that my mad love for comic strips collected from daily and Sunday newspapers would one day guarantee that I would be miles ahead of any screenwriter in Hollywood when it came to writing screenplays of visual excellence.

I discovered, later in life, when I began to work for the Hollywood studios,

that no other screenwriter had "wasted his time" as a boy cutting out, and saving, BUCK ROGERS or TARZAN or FLASH GORDON. No other writer, like myself had written a love letter to Harold Foster, creator and illustrator of PRINCE VALIANT, telling him he was the greatest thing that charged down the road since the Crusades.

No other writer had ever heard back from

PRINCE VALIANT's papa, thanking him and sending on two gigantic PRINCE VALIANT original Sunday pages, four feet high and three feet wide, to be kept as treasures for a lifetime. No other writer had Walt Disney and MICKEY MOUSE for role models.



So when I started out writing at UNIVERSAL STUDIOS, when I was thirty-two, I automatically wrote in metaphors. I could not help but storyboard my screenplays in my mind as if they were Sunday comics panels. So while other screen-writers were cudgeling their brains for visual images, poetic concepts and on-

the-nose metaphors, mine came naturally from a childhood of TARZAN, MANDRAKE THE MAGICIAN, THE KATZENJAMMER KIDS AND BRICK BRADFORD.

There was no rubbish in my mind, only clear, clean, well-lit images of action and romance. I turned out a 90-page outline/treatment screenplay in 4 weeks, which became IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE.

Later in life, my love of comic strips and dinosaurs got me the job of writing the MOBY DICK screenplay for John Houston's film, starring Gregory Peck. So what looked to be a childhood dead-end became a lifetime occupation. All hail, Superman, Tarzan, Killer Kane and Ming the Merciless.

Because of *them*,
I am *me*.

Ron Bradley

Paris

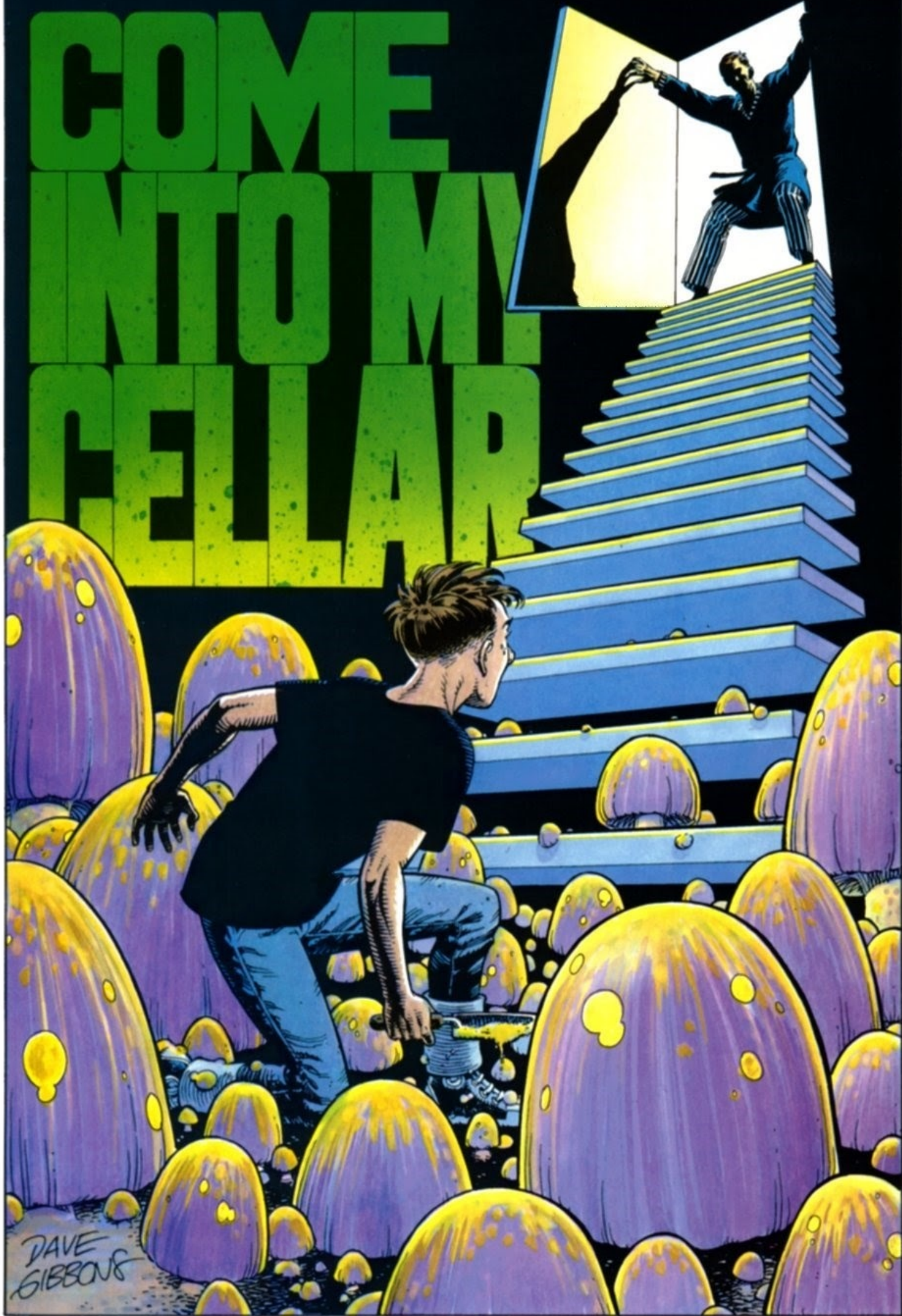
COME INTO MY CELLAR

Adapted by Dave Gibbons

COME INTO MY CELLAR is the result of my sending away for the Johnson-Smith & Co. catalogue when I was ten years old. They used to be in Racine, Wisconsin back in the 1930s and when I got my catalogue it was chockful of things every decent mad-minded American boy would want. Halloween masks, Ching Ling Soo Magic Steel Links, Vanishing Thumbs, and Mushrooms You Can Grow In Your Own Cellar. At lunch one day twenty years ago, a LIFE editor challenged me to make up a story on the spot. Seated at lunch, I looked down at my hamburger, saw some mushrooms, remembered my Johnson-Smith & Co. catalogue of long ago, and ran off to my office to write COME INTO MY CELLAR.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray".

COME INTO MY CELLAR



DAVE
GIBBONS

SATURDAY MORNING.



CYNTHIA COOKING.



TOM ACTUALLY
TAKING A SHOWER.



FAR OFF,
A VOICE...



...CURSING THE
WEATHER, THE TIME,
THE TIDES.



MRS. GOODBODY.



THERE! TAKE
THAT! THIS'LL
FIX YOU!
HAH!



HAPPY
SATURDAY,
MRS. GOOD-
BODY!



NONSENSE!

WITH
THESE
FIENDS
AND PESTS
TO WATCH
FOR?

WHAT
KIND
THIS
TIME?



I
DON'T WANT
TO SHOUT IT
TO THE JAY-
BIRDS, BUT--



SUPPOSE I
TOLD YOU I WAS
THE FIRST LINE OF
DEFENSE CONCERNING
FLYING SAUCERS?



FINE.

THERE'LL
BE ROCKETS
BETWEEN THE
WORLDS ANY
YEAR NOW.



THERE
ALREADY
ARE!

THERE!

TAKE
THAT!



POOR SOUL, MRS.
GOODBODY. ALWAYS
THE ESSENCE
OF REASON.

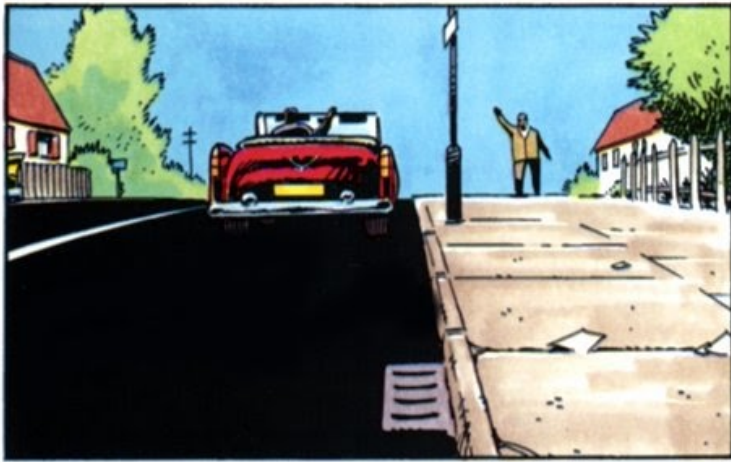


AND NOW WHAT?
OLD AGE?





NOON. DRIVING TO MARKET. ROGER WILLIS.



FELLOW ROTARIAN. BIOLOGY TEACHER.



HI, ROGER. GIVE YOU A LIFT?

HUGH. JUST THE MAN I WANT TO SEE.



I'VE PUT OFF CALLING FOR DAYS.

COULD YOU PLAY PSYCHIATRIST FOR FIVE MINUTES?.



YES. SHOOT.

LET'S DRIVE JUST A MOMENT.



THERE. OKAY. HERE'S WHAT I WANT TO SAY:

SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD.



HASN'T THERE ALWAYS BEEN?

NO, NO, I MEAN...

SOMETHING STRANGE-- UNSEEN--IS HAPPENING.



MRS. GOOD-BODY...

MRS. GOOD-BODY?



THIS MORNING. GAVE ME A TALK ON FLYING SAUCERS.

NO.

NOTHING LIKE SAUCERS. AT LEAST, I DON'T THINK.



TELL ME, WHAT IS INTUITION?

UM... CONSCIOUSLY RECOGNIZING SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN SUB-CONSCIOUS?



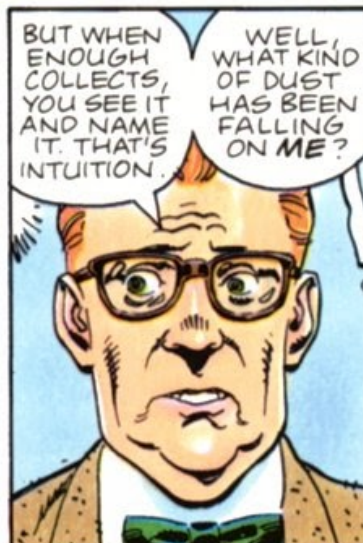
GOOD, GOOD! THAT'S IT!

OVER A LONG PERIOD, THINGS GATHER. DON'T THEY?



SUDDENLY, YOU NEED TO SPIT, BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER SALIVA COLLECTING.

DUST FALLS ON YOU EVERY DAY AND YOU DON'T FEEL IT.



BUT WHEN ENOUGH COLLECTS, YOU SEE IT AND NAME IT. THAT'S INTUITION.

WELL, WHAT KIND OF DUST HAS BEEN FALLING ON ME?



A FEW METEORS IN THE SKY AT NIGHT? FUNNY WEATHER?

I DON'T KNOW. CERTAIN COLORS, SMELLS, THE HOUSE CREAKING? HAIRS PRICKLING?



ALL I KNOW IS, THE DUST HAS COLLECTED.

SUDDENLY, I KNOW.

YOU KNOW WHAT?

I'M AFRAID.
I'M NOT AFRAID.
THEN I'M AFRAID AGAIN.



DOCTORS CHECKED ME. I'M AL.
NO FAMILY PROBLEMS.



JOE'S A GOOD SON. DOROTHY'S REMARKABLE.

LUCKY MAN.



BEYOND THAT NOW.

SCARED STIFF, REALLY. FOR ME, MY FAMILY...

...EVEN FOR YOU.

ME?



I'M AFRAID FOR EVERYBODY.

YOUR FRIENDS, MINE, AND THEIRS, ON OUT OF SIGHT.

PRETTY SILLY, EH?



WELL--

WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?



BE AWARE.

WATCH EVERYTHING FOR A FEW DAYS.

WE DON'T USE HALF WHAT GOD GAVE US...

EVERYTHING?

WE SHOULD HEAR MORE, FEEL MORE, SMELL MORE, TASTE MORE.



MAYBE SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE WAY THE WIND BLOWS THESE WEEDS.

MAYBE IT'S THE SUN ON THOSE WIRES...



...OR THE CICADA'S SONG.

IF ONLY WE COULD STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN FOR A WHILE AND COMPARE NOTES.



TELL ME TO SHUT UP THEN, AND I WILL.

GOOD ENOUGH.



BUT HOW DO I KNOW THE THING I'M LOOKING FOR WHEN I SEE IT?

YOU'LL KNOW.



YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW.

OR WE'RE DONE FOR, ALL OF US.



HUGH, DO YOU THINK I'M--

OFF MY ROCKER?

NONSENSE! YOU'RE JUST NERVOUS, IS ALL. TAKE SOME TIME OFF.



DROP AROUND ANY TIME.

I HOPE I WILL, HUGH. I REALLY HOPE I WILL.



SUPERMARKET

MART

EVENING. MUSICAL
ICE IN LEMONADE.



JUST SWEET ENOUGH.
JUST SOUR ENOUGH.



WHAT
ARE YOU
UP TO?



CYNTHIA,
IS YOUR
INTUITION
IN RUNNING
ORDER?



IS THIS EARTH-
QUAKE WEATHER?
IS THE LAND GOING
TO SINK?

OR IS
IT ONLY THAT
OUR DELPHINIUM
WILL DIE OF
THE BLIGHT?



HOLD ON.
LET ME
FEEL MY
BONES.



NO. NO WAR. NO
EARTH-
QUAKES.
NOT EVEN
A BLIGHT.

WHY?



I'VE MET A LOT
OF DOOM-TALKERS
TODAY. WELL,
TWO, ANYW--

CRAASH



SORRY.

WHAT'S
WRONG,
DAD?

NOTHING.

IS
THAT
PART OF
THE CROP?



PART
OF IT.
BOY,
THEY'RE
DOING
GREAT.

JUST
SEVEN
HOURS.
LOTS OF
WATER--



--AND
LOOK HOW
BIG!

I'LL
BE...



I HATE
TO BE A
SPOIL-
SPORT,
BUT...

THERE'S
NO WAY
THAT
THEY'RE
ANYTHING
BUT MUSH-
ROOMS, IS
THERE?



YOU
THINK I'M
GOING TO
FEED YOU
POISON
FUNGIDS?

THAT'S
JUST
IT.

HOW DO
YOU TELL
THEM APART?



EAT
'EM.

IF YOU LIVE,
THEY'RE MUSH-
ROOMS.

IF YOU
DROP DEAD
--WELL!



I--
I DON'T
LIKE
THEM.

BOY, OH,
BOY. WHEN'S
THE NEXT
WET BLANKET
SALE IN
THIS HOUSE?



TOM--

NEVER MIND.

EVERYONE
FIGURES THEY'LL BE
RUINED BY THE BOY
ENTREPRENEUR.



WHEEZING, GASPING.
SUCKING, SNEEZING.



SOMEONE DYING?

NO. BUG SPRAY.
SWEET AND SICKLY.



TEN-FIFTEEN...

BRRINGG



WHA--
ROGER?

WHERE
ARE
YOU?

YOU KNOW
VERY WELL YOU'RE
RESPONSIBLE
FOR THIS.

THE VOICE LIGHT,
ALMOST AMUSED.



I
SHOULD
BE
ANGRY!

ROGER, I
SWEAR I DON'T
KNOW. I GOT
THAT TELEGRAM
FROM YOU--



JOVIAL NOW.

TELEGRAM?
I SENT NO
TELEGRAM.

THE POLICE
SUDDENLY
POUR ONTO THE
SOUTHBOUND
TRAIN, PULL
ME OFF...



... AND
I'M CALLING
YOU TO GET
THEM OFF
MY NECK.

IS THIS
SOME
JOKE,
HUGH?

BUT ROGER,
YOU JUST
VANISHED!



ON A
BUSINESS
TRIP! I TOLD
DOROTHY
ABOUT
THIS.

THIS IS
ALL VERY
CONFUSING,
ROGER. YOU'RE
IN NO
DANGER?



I'M FINE,
HEALTHY,
FREE AND
UNAFRAID.

BUT,
ROGER, YOUR
PREMON-
ITIONS...?



POPPY-
COCK!

NOW,
GIVE ME
PERMISSION
TO GO. CALL
DOROTHY
TOO.

HOW COULD
SHE HAVE
FORGOTTEN?

WINNING AND WARM,
THE OLD ROGER.



ROGER, IF YOU'RE
RUNNING OFF
FROM DOROTHY,
YOU CAN TELL
ME.



I LOVE
HER
WITH
ALL MY
HEART.

NOW, HERE'S
THE POLICE.
GOODBYE,
HUGH.

GOOD--



A LIEUTENANT, ANGRY.

DID
FORTNUM
WANT HIS
FRIEND
HELD OR
RELEASED?

RELEASED.



I
FEEL SO
FOOLISH.

HOW
D'YOU
THINK I
FEEL?



WHO SENT
THAT
TELEGRAM, AND
WHY?

ANYWAY,
I'M GLAD
ROGER'S ALL
RIGHT.

HE
ISN'T.



BUT YOU
SAID--

WELL, WE
COULDN'T HAVE
HIM
DRAGGED OFF
THAT
TRAIN AND SENT
HOME
IF HE INSISTED
HE WAS OKAY...



NO.

HE SENT THAT
TELEGRAM AND
CHANGED HIS
MIND AFTER-
WARDS.

WHY,
WHY,
WHY?



WHY WARN
US AGAINST
SPECIAL
DELIVERY?

THE ONLY
ONE THIS
YEAR IS THE
PACKAGE
TOM GOT
THIS
MORN--

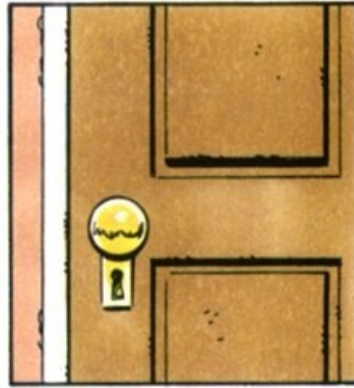


A DOORKNOB
RATTLES.



A DOOR OPENS
AND CLOSSES.

ANOTHER DOOR
RATTLES.



ANOTHER DOOR
SWINGS WIDE AND
THEN SHUTS.

A SMELL OF
DAMP EARTH.



DOROTHY WILLIS,
SITTING ALONE IN
A HOUSE WITH TOO
MANY LIGHTS ON.



HUGH?
YOU STILL
THERE?



NOTHING WRONG.
THE CURTAINS BLOW.
A CLOCK TICKS.



MIDNIGHT FILLS
THE BEDROOM.

CLEAR ON MORNING
AIR, MRS. GOODBODY'S
VOICE, A MILLION
YEARS GONE.



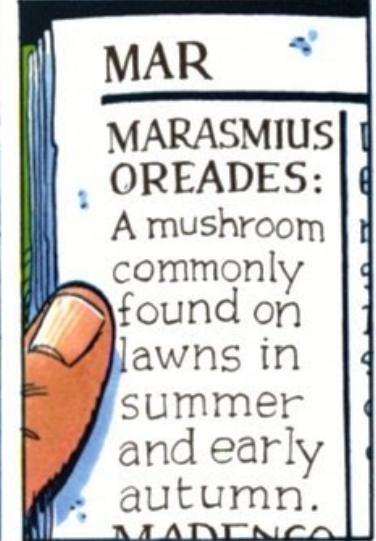
ROGER CLOUDS
THE NOON SUN.

A DOWNSTATE
POLICEMAN CURSES.



ROGER'S VOICE AGAIN,
FADING, FAR AWAY.

BEHIND THE HEDGE,
MRS. GOODBODY SHOUTS.



TREES SOFTLY
RUSTLE.



THE FRONT DOOR
TAPS SHUT.



CAN'T SLEEP?

TOO WARM, I GUESS.



IT'S NOT WARM.

NO. IN FACT, IT'S COLD.



CYNTHIA...

WHAT IF...?

WELL, WHAT IF ROGER WAS RIGHT THIS MORNING?



WHAT IF MRS. GOODBODY'S RIGHT TOO?

IF SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS HAPPENING. LIKE-- WELL--



EARTH BEING INVADED BY THINGS FROM OTHER WORLDS, MAYBE.

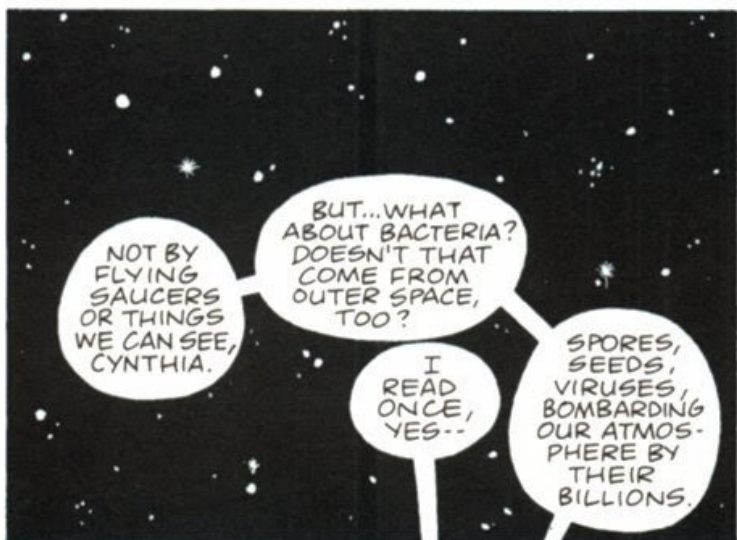
HUGH...



...OBVIOUSLY WE'RE NOT BEING INVADED OR WE'D NOTICE.

BUT SAY WE'VE ONLY HALF-NOTICED, BECOME UNEASY ABOUT SOMETHING.

THEN WHAT? HOW COULD WE BE INVADED?



NOT BY FLYING SAUCERS OR THINGS WE CAN SEE, CYNTHIA.

BUT...WHAT ABOUT BACTERIA? DOESN'T THAT COME FROM OUTER SPACE, TOO?

I READ ONCE, YES--

SPORES, SEEDS, VIRUSES, BOMBARDING OUR ATMOSPHERE BY THEIR BILLIONS.



AN INVISIBLE RAIN, FALLING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, THE CITIES AND, RIGHT NOW...

OUR LAWN?

OUR LAWN.



AND MRS. GOODBODY'S.

BUT HER SORT ARE ALWAYS PULLING WEEDS, SPRAYING POISON...



HARD FOR STRANGE LIFE FORMS TO SURVIVE IN CITIES... WEATHER'S A PROBLEM, TOO.



BEST CLIMATE MIGHT BE SOUTH--ALABAMA, GEORGIA, LOUISIANA. IN DAMP BAYOUS, THINGS COULD GROW TO A FINE SIZE.



OH, REALLY, YOU DON'T BELIEVE TOM'S MAIL ORDER NOVELTY COMPANY IS RUN BY SIX-FOOT-TALL MUSHROOMS FROM ANOTHER PLANET?



PUT THAT WAY, IT SOUNDS FUNNY.

FUNNY! IT'S HILARIOUS!





WHAT IF SOMEONE, WANDERING IN THE SWAMP, PICKED THE MUSHROOMS AND ATE THEM?

COULD THEY SPREAD THROUGH HIS BLOOD, TAKE OVER HIS CELLS?

A MUSHROOM WOULDN'T NEED ITS OWN ARMS AND LEGS.

ROGER ATE THE MUSHROOMS HIS SON GAVE HIM.



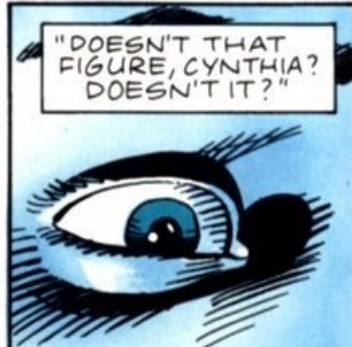
CHANGE HIM FROM A MAN TO A--MARTIAN?

NOT IF IT COULD BORROW PEOPLE, LIVE IN THEM, BECOME THEM.

HE BECAME 'SOMETHING ELSE'.

IN A LAST FLASH OF SANITY, OF BEING 'HIMSELF', HE TELEGRAPHED US, WARNED US.

THE 'ROGER' THAT TELEPHONED LATER WASN'T ROGER ANYMORE, BUT A CAPTIVE OF WHAT HE HAD EATEN.



"NO, NO. IT DOESN'T FIGURE. NO, NO, NO..."

RRUSSSTLE



TOM?
ARE YOU DOWN THERE?

TOM?

YES, DAD?

IT'S AFTER MIDNIGHT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN THERE?

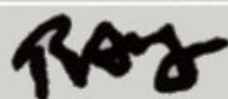




ROCKET SUMMER & THE LOCUSTS

Adapted by James Sherman
Colored by James Sherman
and Hanne Kjeldgaard

My novels come upon me by surprise. I write stories about Mars for vast numbers of years and one morning wake up to discover I have inadvertently finished a novel. Similar things happened to cause me to create DANDELION WINE out of two dozen seemingly unrelated tales. But in the case of THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES, at the age of 24 I began to scribble out and type forth an entire series of encounters between Earthmen and Martians. I didn't know what I was doing until my editor at Doubleday suggested that perhaps I had given birth to a novel when my back was turned. He suggested I go back to the YMCA and stay up half the night writing outlines. Which meant, finally, add flesh and skin to connect up my various Martian encounters. ROCKET SUMMER is one of them. Pure fantasy, almost, for there are rare few snowfalls in mid-Florida, and rare few spaceships taking off from Middle United States [none, when last I looked.] But since THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES was first and foremost a poetic fantasy, I manages to hoodwink my readers into accepting my fancy. THE LOCUSTS was another interim bit of connective tissue, a poetic flight I wrote to describe the arrival of a sky full of spacecraft. Hardly factual, but a fiction, I hope, that will entertain.



JANUARY 1999

One minute it was Ohio winter, with doors closed, windows locked, the panes blind with frost, icicles fringing every roof, children sledding down slopes.



JAMES SHERIDAN
HANNE KJELDGAARD

And then a long wave of heat pulsed across the small town. A flooding sea of hot air; it seemed as if someone had left open a bakery oven.



Icicles dropped, shattering, to melt. Doors flew open. Windows flew up.



ROCKET SUMMER. The words passed among the people.
ROCKET SUMMER. The desert-warm air erasing the artwork of winter.

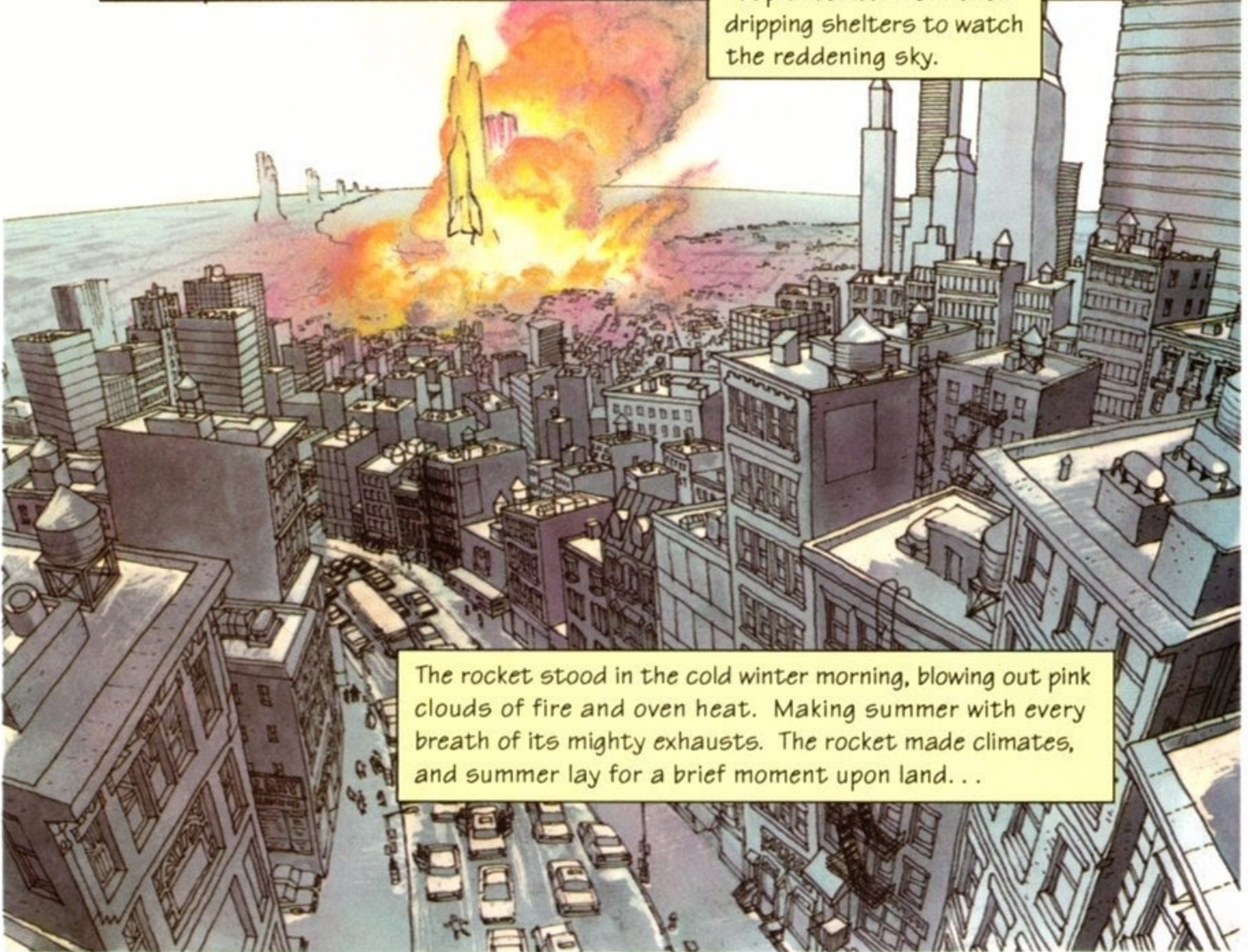




Snow, falling from the cold sky upon the town, turned to a hot rain before it touched the ground. Skis and sleds suddenly useless.



ROCKET SUMMER.
People leaned from their dripping shelters to watch the reddening sky.



The rocket stood in the cold winter morning, blowing out pink clouds of fire and oven heat. Making summer with every breath of its mighty exhausts. The rocket made climates, and summer lay for a brief moment upon land. . .



FEBRUARY 2002

THE LOGAN

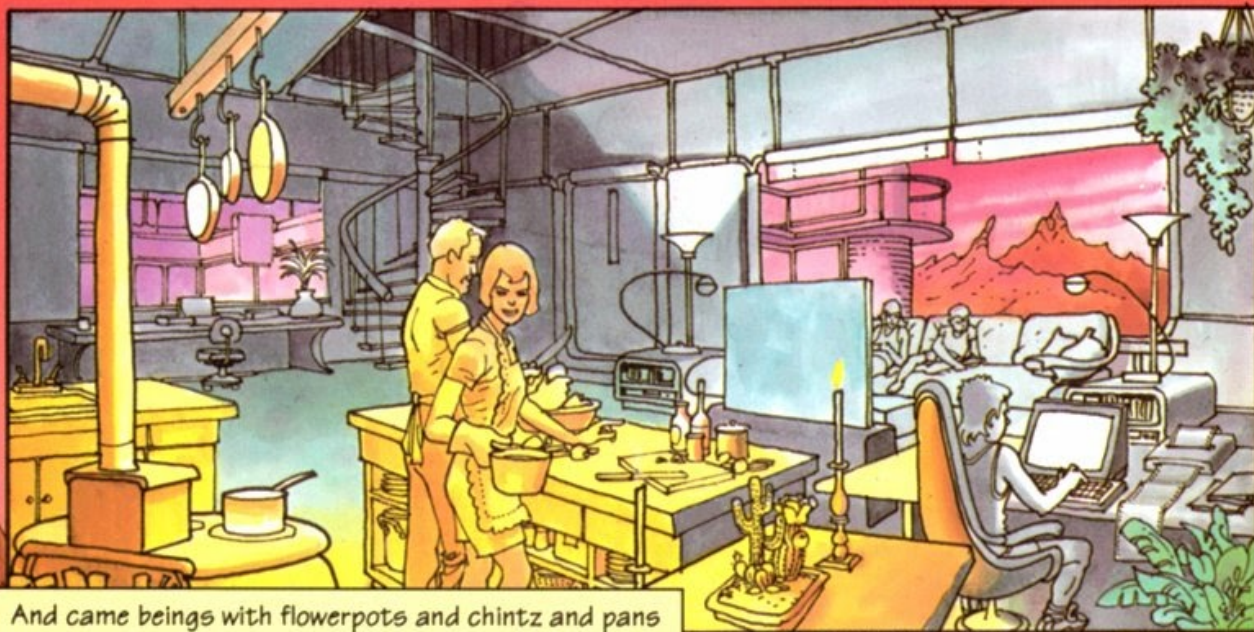
THE ROCKETS CAME. Like drums beating in the night.

Like locusts swarming and settling in blooms of rosy smoke.

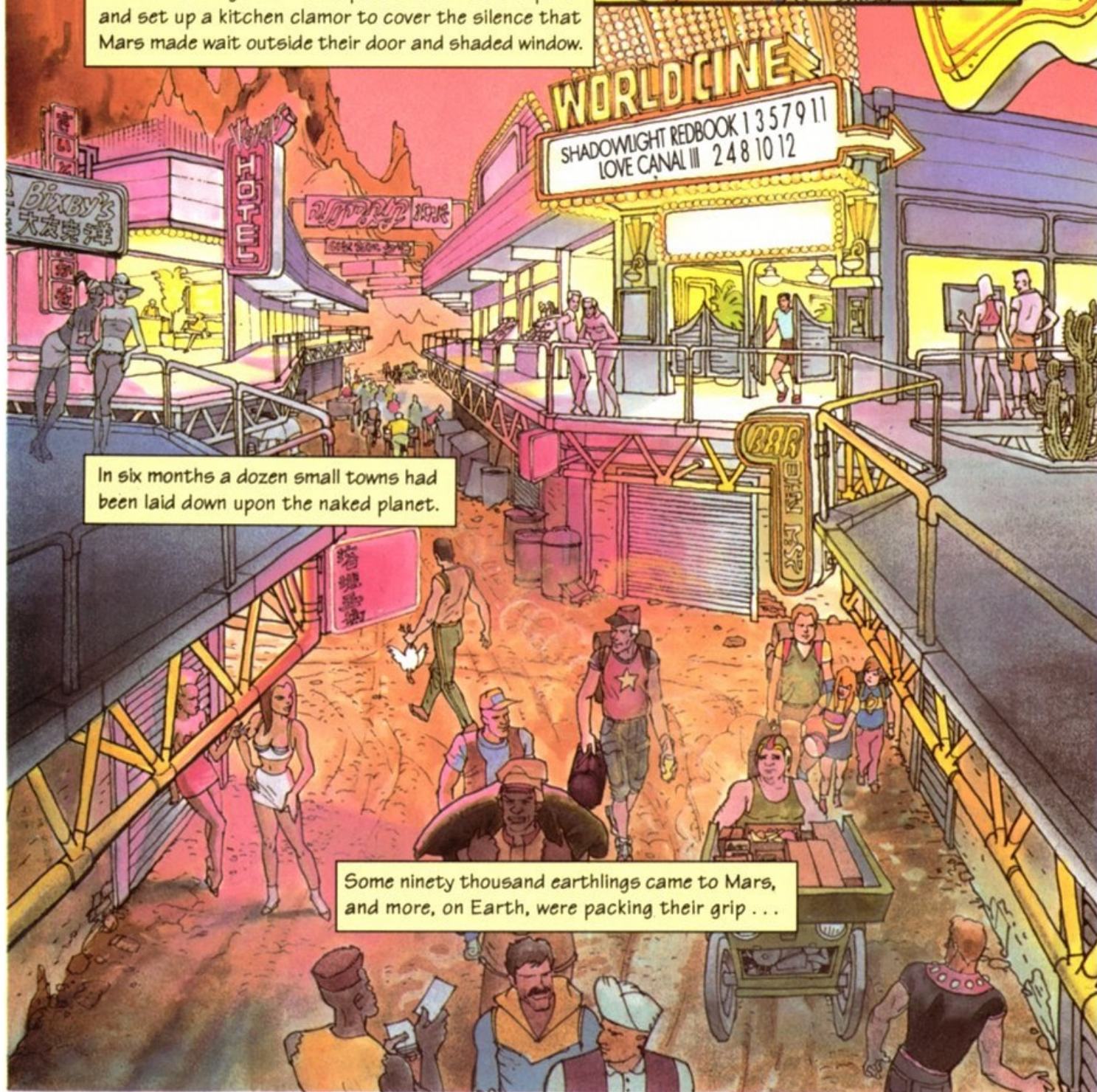
THE ROCKETS set the bony meadows afire, turned rock to lava, turned wood to charcoal, transmuted water to steam, made sand and silica into green glass which lay like shattered mirrors reflecting the invasion, all about.

And from the rockets ran beings with hammers in their hands to beat the strange world into a shape that was familiar to the eye, to bludgeon away all strangeness.





And came beings with flowerpots and chintz and pans and set up a kitchen clamor to cover the silence that Mars made wait outside their door and shaded window.



In six months a dozen small towns had been laid down upon the naked planet.

Some ninety thousand earthlings came to Mars, and more, on Earth, were packing their grip ...

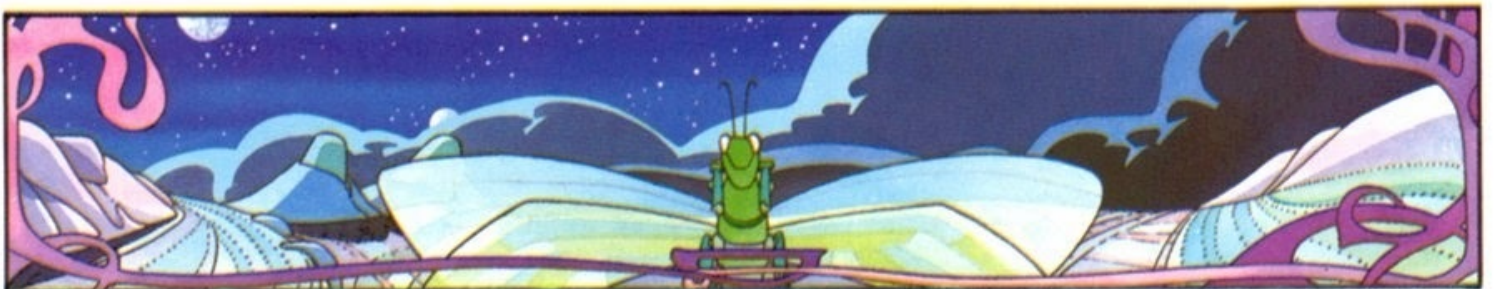
NIGHT MEETING

Adapted by Daniel Torres

NIGHT MEETING was another of those experiments where I simply sat down at my typewriter and said let's bring two characters together from different Time Streams and see what happens. So I sat and typed and let the Martian and the Earthman talk, each convinced that the other was in space in another year, each trying to describe to the other what architectures lay below and what festivities awaited. And both, finally, having to give in, relax, and accept the other person's version of Time and the Truth. I let the characters speak for themselves and their dream of reality. I never interfere with my story people. Their lives and thoughts must be acted out on the typewriter as I watch. This is where the fun happens. If I did not have fun letting my characters come alive, you the reader would not have the same fun and everything would be born lifeless. As a result it is one of my favorite stories. And it all happened because I built a road and let two fantastic vehicles move along the road for a night encounter. The road and the Martian and the Earthman were between my ears one moment and the next out in the open, onto paper, and through your eyes into your head.

RAY

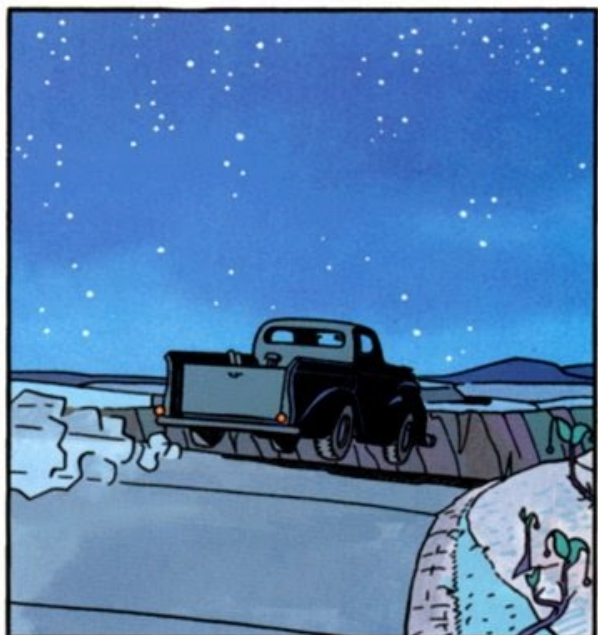
Night Meeting



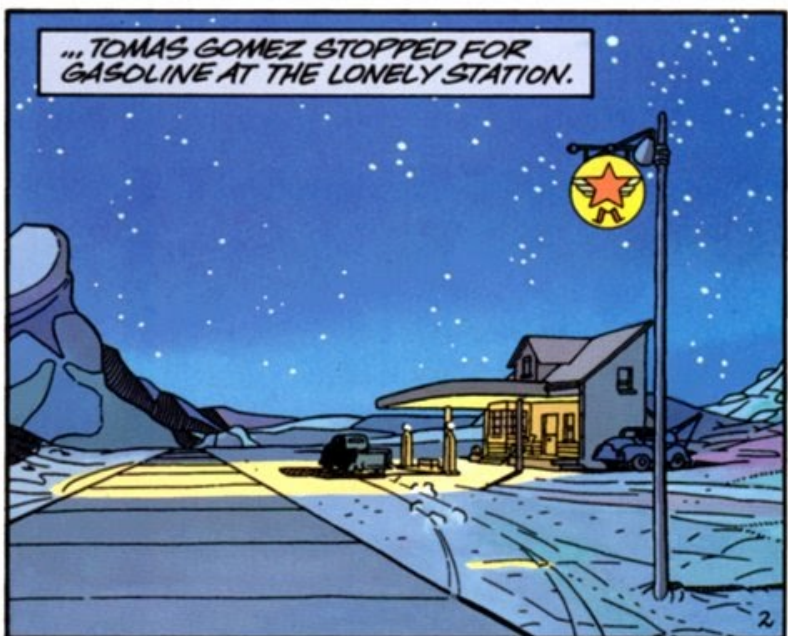
MARS: AUGUST, 2002

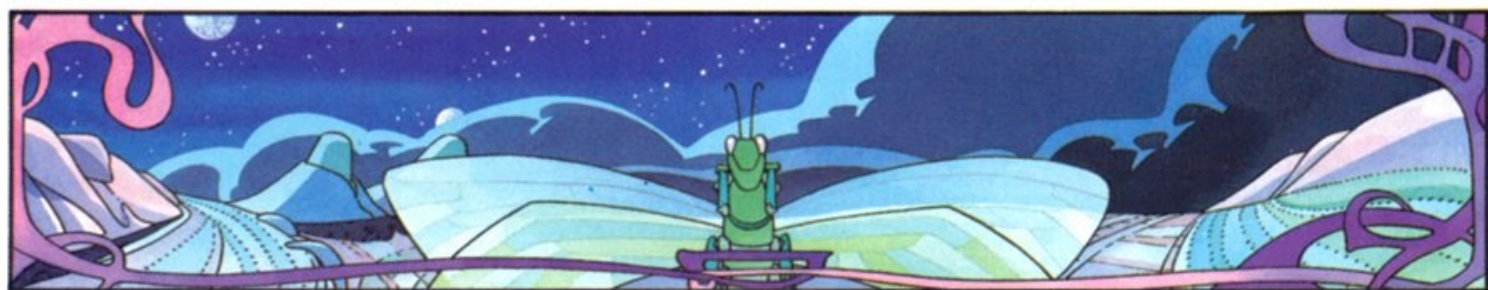


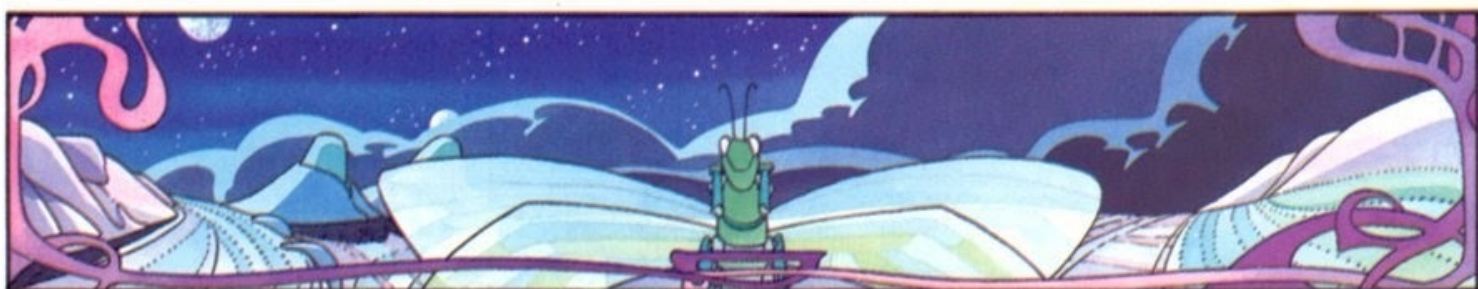
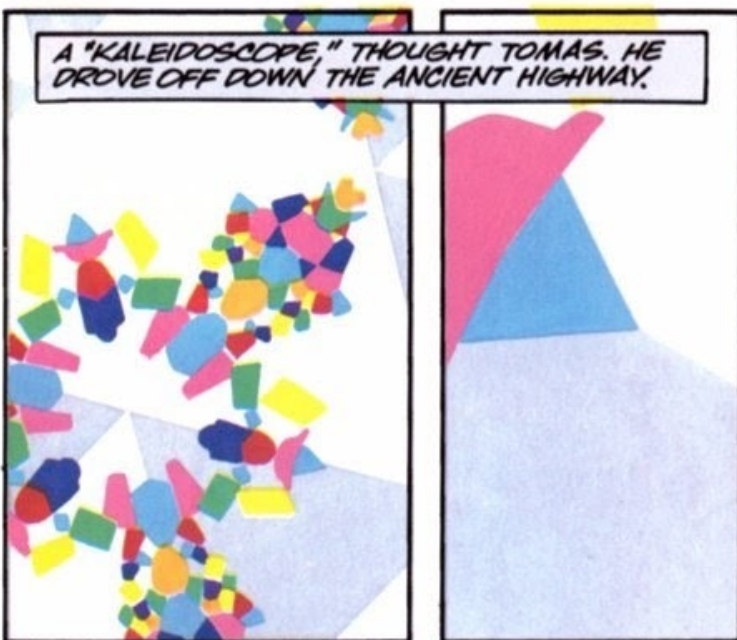
BEFORE GOING UP INTO
THE BLUE HILLS...

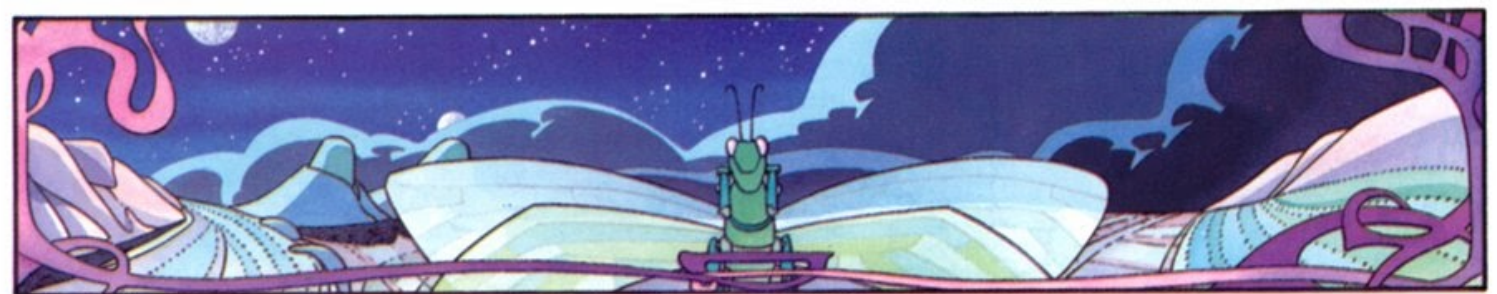


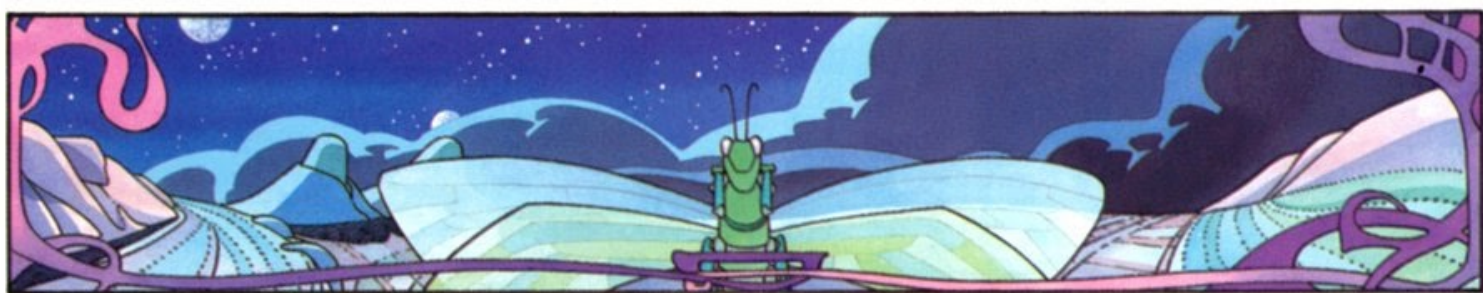
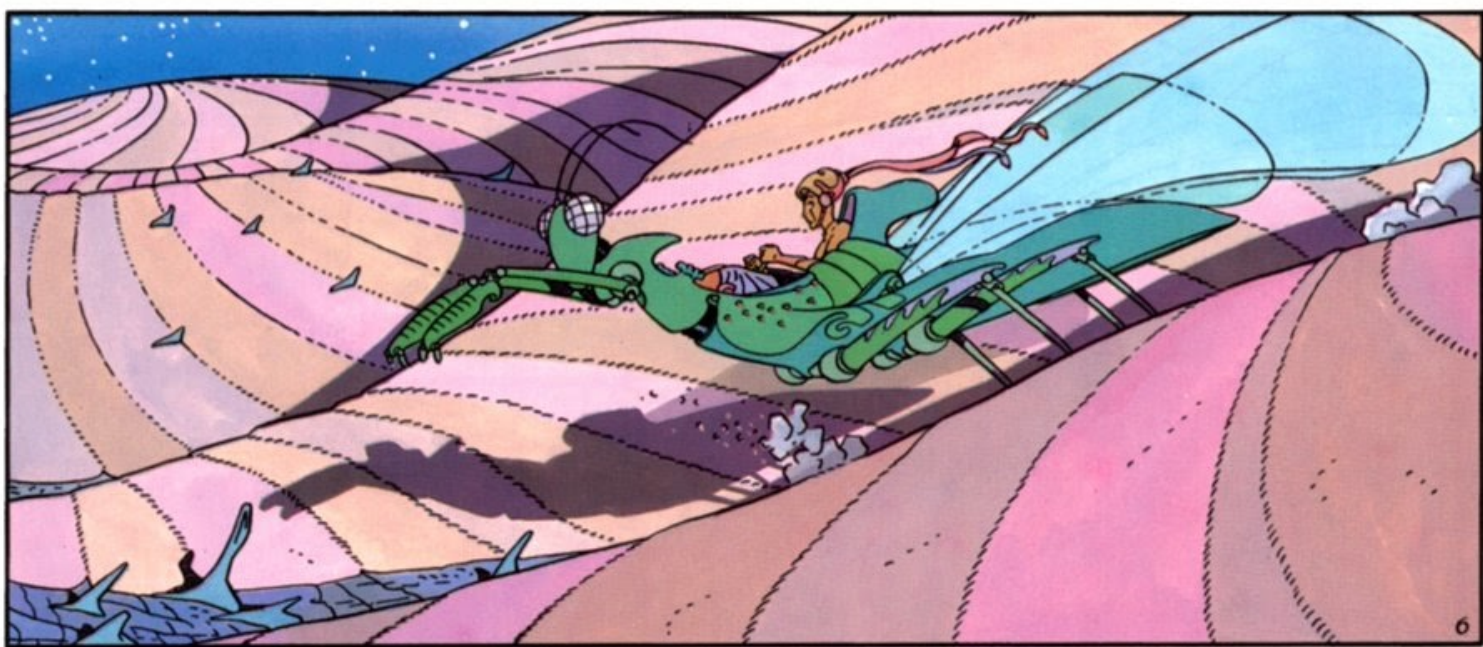
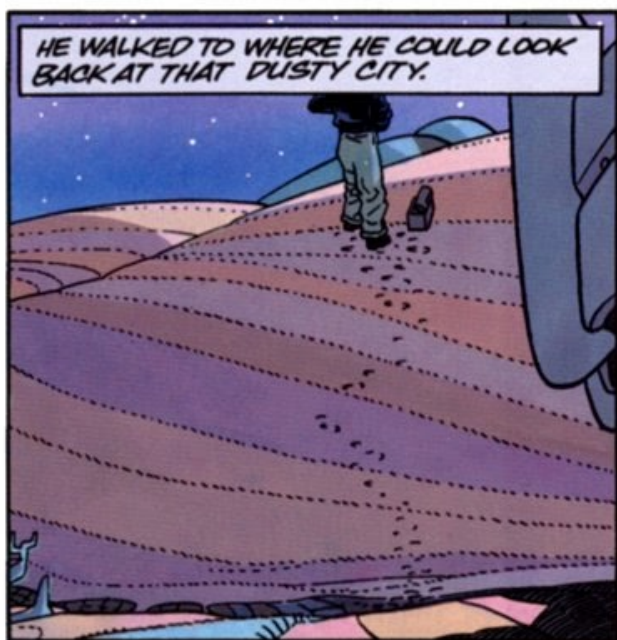
...TOMAS GOMEZ STOPPED FOR
GASOLINE AT THE LONELY STATION.







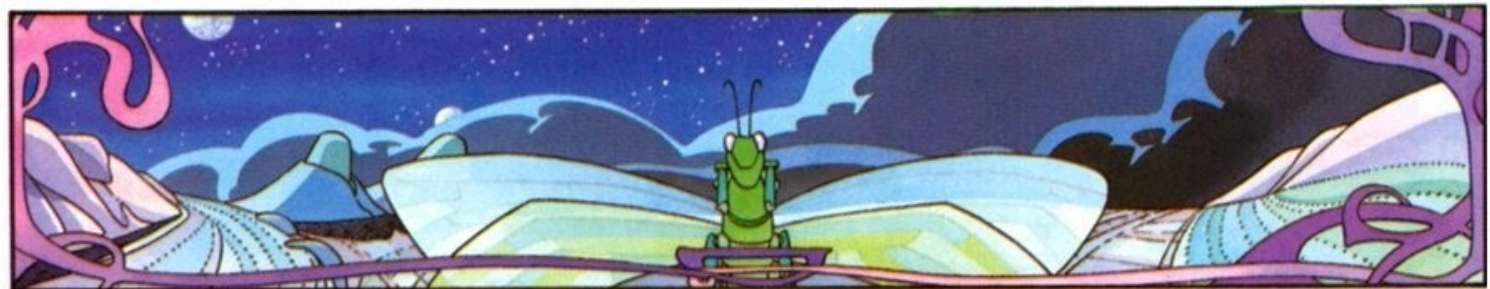


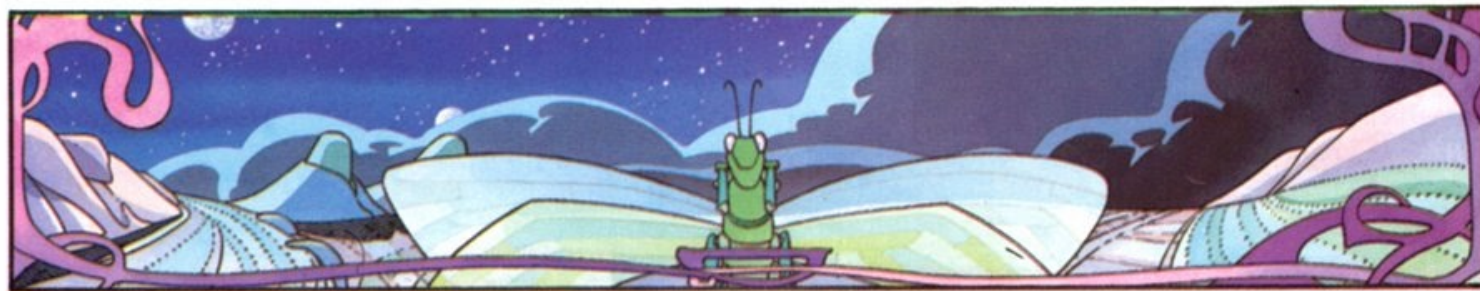


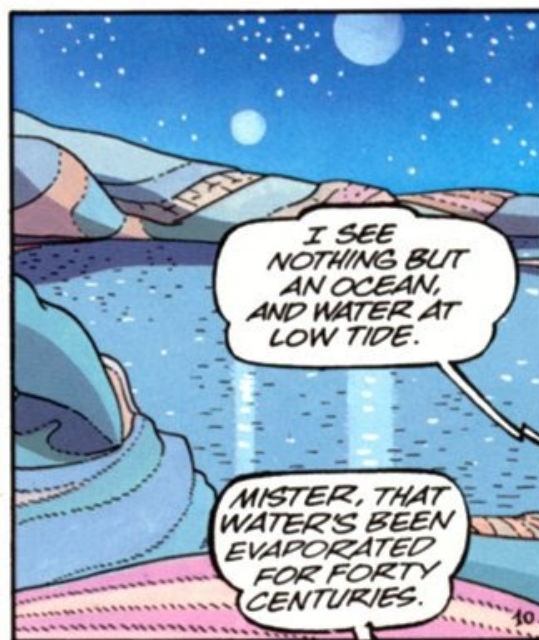


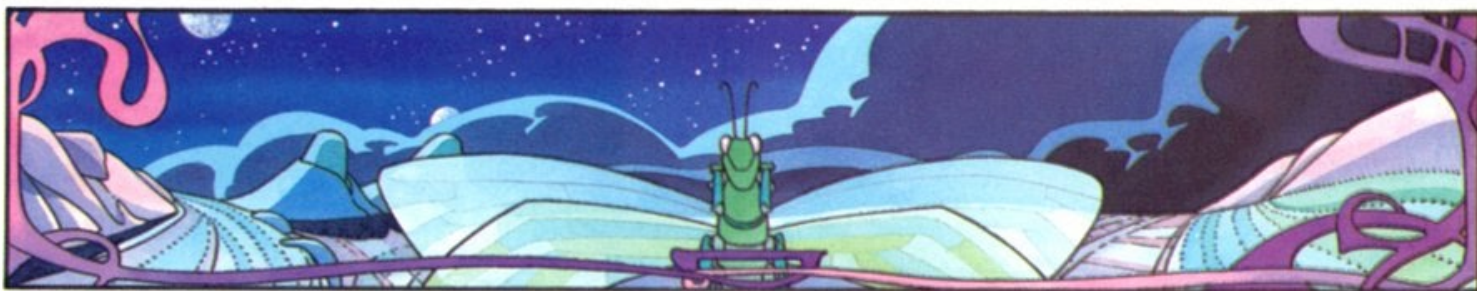
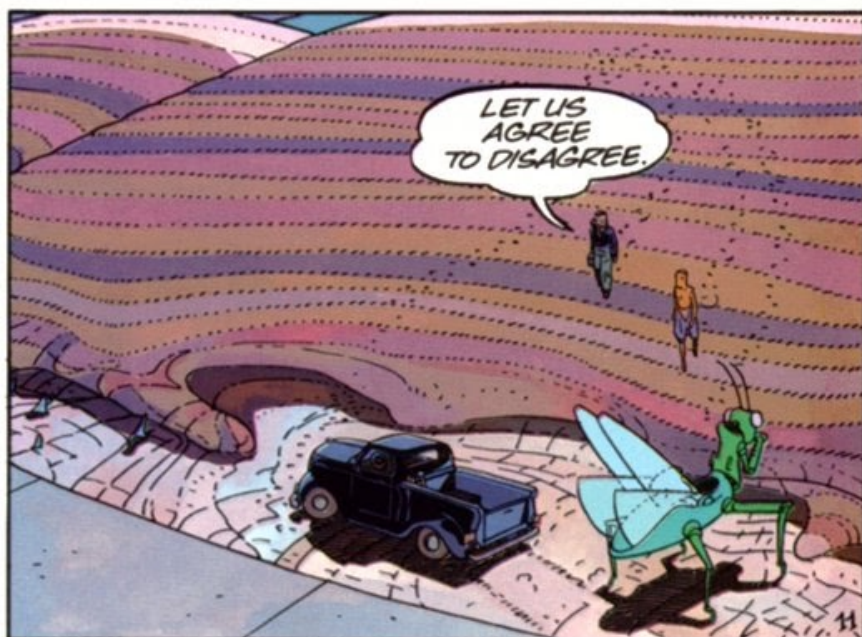
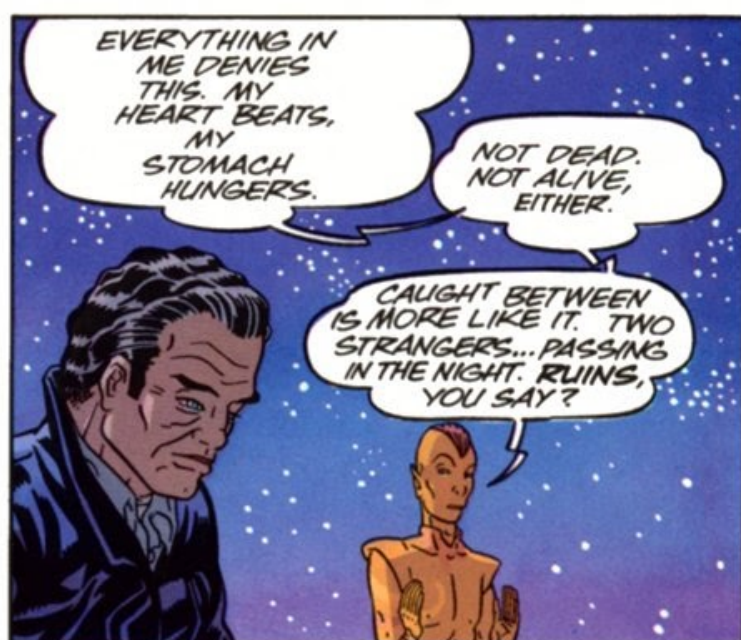


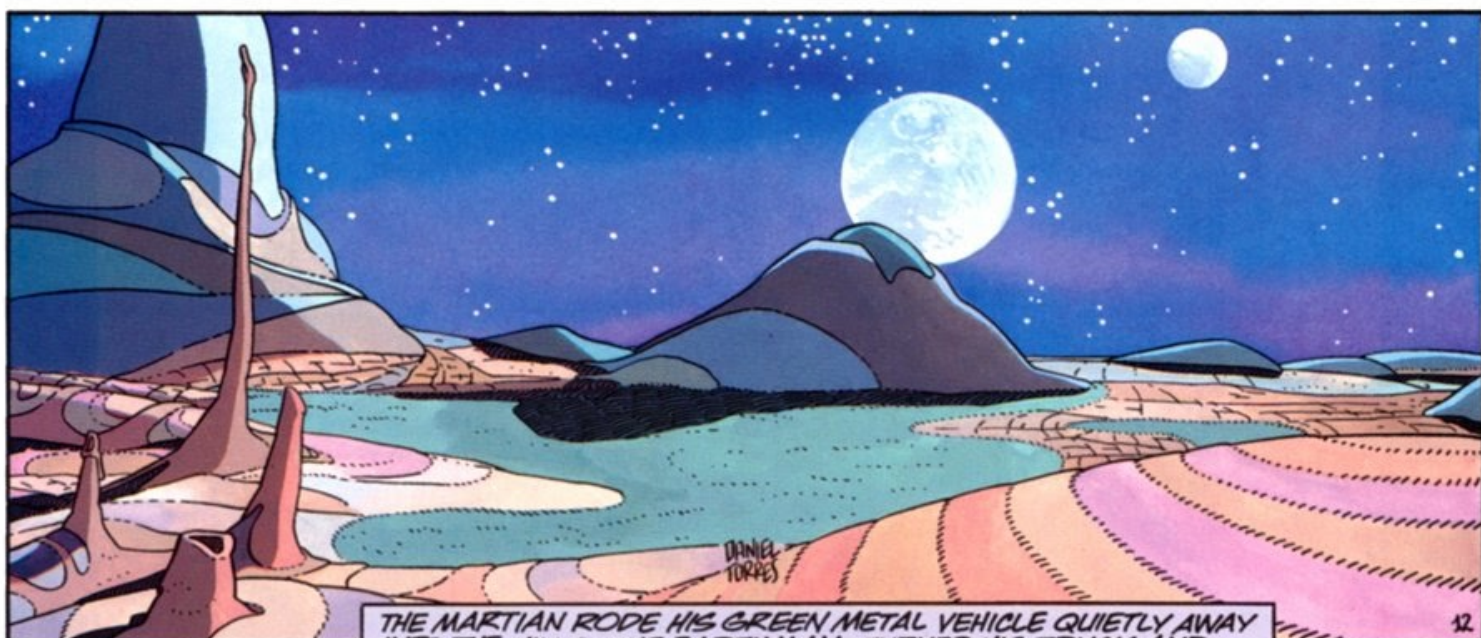
TOMAS FELT HIS HEAD TOUCHED,
BUT NO HANDS HAD TOUCHED HIM.









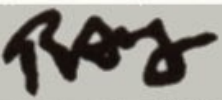


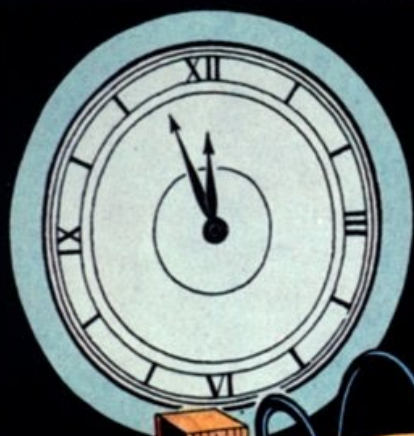
THE MARTIAN RODE HIS GREEN METAL VEHICLE QUIETLY AWAY
INTO THE HILLS. THE EARTHMAN TURNED HIS TRUCK AND
DROVE IT SILENTLY IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. STARLIGHT
TWINKLED ON THE EMPTY HIGHWAY, WHERE NOW THERE WAS
NO SOUND, NO CAR, NO PERSON. NOTHING.



PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME

Adapted by Ralph Reese

Over the years, as we began to imagine robots of every size and shape, including humanoid, I could not help wondering what would happen when more and more of these electric machines took over the tasks of real men and women. Could or could not a computer, or any of its mechanical cousins, do good or evil, directly or indirectly? And what of the people who ran these machines? How do we look at them and accuse them of good or bad behavior? Out of such meandering thought, I conjured up PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME, thinking: if it is murder to kill a live human, what sort of sin is it if you slay a duplicate of that human? Is it the equivalent, in many ways, of making a wax effigy of your enemy and sticking sharp needles in it to assassinate that person long-distance, by suggestion? If you refuse and outlaw witchcraft, what do you do with the super witchcraft of the robot designed to resemble a former associate, lover or spouse, and "killed" at the moment of technological birth? The answer could move in many directions. The idea in my story PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME could be duplicated by other writers with different goals and happier or unhappier endings. When you finish with my tale, write your own version of this strange sad encounter. 



THREE MINUTES TO TWELVE...
THREE SHORT MINUTES IN THE LIFE
OF GEORGE HILL, BUT THEY ARE THE
MOST IMPORTANT THREE MINUTES HE
WILL EVER SPEND. THEY ARE THE
LAST THREE MINUTES OF HIS LIFE.
THREE MINUTES TO THINK...

TO FEEL...

TO REMEMBER...



PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME

Adapted by Ralph Reese

TIME TO THINK BACK...BACK TO THAT DAY SEVERAL MONTHS AGO...BACK TO THE **STRANGE DARK MAN** IN HIS SHADOWY OFFICE...



YOU WISH TO KILL YOUR WIFE?

YES... NO... NOT EXACTLY... I MEAN...



NAME AND ADDRESS?

GEORGE HILL.
ELEVEN SOUTH
SAINT JAMES,
GLENVIEW.



THE MAN WROTE THIS DOWN EMOTIONLESSLY.

YOUR WIFE'S NAME?

KATHERINE.

AGE?

THIRTY ONE.

HAVE YOU A
DIMENSIONAL PHOTO
OF HER? A TAPE
RECORDING OF HER
VOICE? AH, I SEE YOU
DO. NOW...

THEN CAME A
SWIFT SERIES
OF QUESTIONS...
COLOR OF HAIR,
EYES, SKIN...
FAVORITE
PERFUME,
TEXTURE AND
SIZE INDEX...



AN HOUR LATER, GEORGE HILL WAS PERSPIRING.
THE DARK MAN AROSE AND SCOWLED.



THAT'S ALL. YOU
STILL WANT TO GO
THROUGH WITH IT?

YES.

SIGN HERE.

HE SIGNED.

YOU KNOW THIS
IS ILLEGAL?

YES.

THE MAN SMILED FAINTLY...

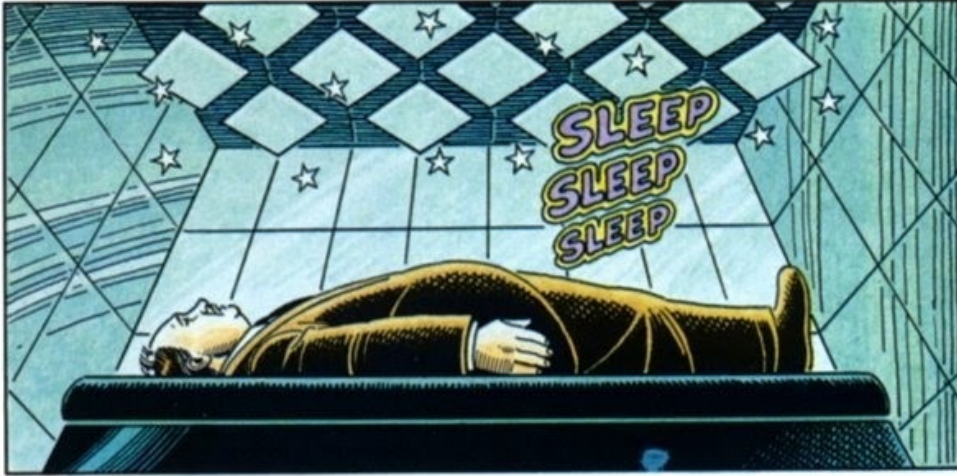
IT'LL TAKE NINE HOURS TO PREPARE
THE MARIONETTE OF YOUR WIFE.
SLEEP AWHILE... IT'LL HELP YOUR
NERVES. THE THIRD MIRROR ROOM
ON YOUR LEFT IS UNOCCUPIED.

...AND THAT
WE'RE IN NO WAY
LIABLE FOR WHAT
HAPPENS TO YOU
AS A RESULT OF
THIS REQUEST?

YES, YES...
FOR GOD'S
SAKE! LET'S
GET ON
WITH IT!



GEORGE MOVED NUMBLY, SLOWLY TO THE MIRROR ROOM. HE LAY ON THE BLUE VELVET COT, HIS BODY PRESSURE CAUSING THE MIRRORS IN THE CEILING TO WHIRL. A SOFT VOICE SANG...



HE MURMURED SOFTLY...



THE MIRRORS GLITTERED AS THEY ROTATED HYPNOTICALLY...HE SLEPT.

HE DREAMED HE WAS FORTY-ONE AGAIN. HE AND KATIE ON A GREEN HILL SOMEWHERE WITH A PICNIC LUNCH, THEIR HELICOPTER BESIDE THEM. THE WIND BLEW KATIE'S HAIR IN GOLDEN STRANDS AND SHE WAS LAUGHING...



THEY KISSED AND HELD HANDS, NOT EATING. THEY READ POEMS. IT SEEMED THEY WERE ALWAYS READING POEMS...

OTHER SCENES...HE AND KATIE FLYING OVER GREECE AND ITALY AND SWITZERLAND, IN THAT LONG, CLEAR AUTUMN. FLYING AND NEVER STOPPING!



AND THEN -- THE NIGHTMARE. KATIE AND LEONARD PHELPS. GEORGE CRIED OUT IN HIS SLEEP. WHY? WHY HAD IT HAPPENED? WAS IT THE DIFFERENCE IN AGE? GEORGE TOUCHING FIFTY, KATIE SO YOUNG, SO VERY YOUNG...

THE SCENE WAS UNFORGETTABLY VIVID...PHELPS AND KATHERINE IN THE GREEN PARK. GEORGE HIMSELF APPEARING ON THE PATH ONLY IN TIME TO SEE THEM KISSING...



THE RAGE...THE STRUGGLE...THE ATTEMPT TO KILL LEONARD PHELPS...MORE DAYS, MORE NIGHTMARES...



GEORGE HILL AWOKE, WEEPING.





MR. HILL, WE'RE
READY FOR YOU
NOW.

HILL AROSE, CLUMSILY, HE
SAW HIMSELF IN THE HIGH
AND NOW-SILENT MIRRORS...



HE LOOKED EVERY ONE OF
HIS YEARS. A LITTLE TOO
MUCH **STOMACH**...A LITTLE
TOO MUCH **CHIN**...HE EYED
HIMSELF WITH LOATHING.
IT HAD BEEN A **WRETCHED**
ERROR.



THIS IS KATIE'S
ROOM!

WE TRY TO HAVE
EVERYTHING
PERFECT.

GEORGE HILL DREW
FORTH A CHECK FOR
TEN THOUSAND
DOLLARS. THE MAN
TOOK IT AND
DEPARTED. A LOT OF
MONEY, BUT THEN
RICH MEN COULD
AFFORD THE LUXURY
OF CATHARTIC
MURDER. THE VIOLENT
UNVIOLENCE...THE
DEATH WITHOUT DEATH.
THE ROOM WAS QUIET
AS HE SAT, FEELING
THE **GUN** IN HIS
POCKET, WAITING....



HELLO,
GEORGE.

HE WHIRLED AROUND...



KATIE...

SHE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY BEHIND HIM.
HER HAIR WAS BRIGHT AROUND HER
THROAT AND HER EYES WERE BLUE AND
CLEAR. HE DID NOT SPEAK FOR A LONG
WHILE...

HE PUT OUT HIS HANDS LIKE A SLEEPWALKER, WALKING FORWARD AS IF UNDER
A DEEP PRESSURE OF WATER. HE WALKED AROUND AND AROUND HER, TOUCHING
HER...



YOU'RE
BEAUTIFUL.

HOW ELSE
COULD I BE?



LET ME LOOK
AT YOU.

HAVEN'T YOU SEEN
ENOUGH OF ME IN ALL
THESE YEARS?

NEVER
ENOUGH.

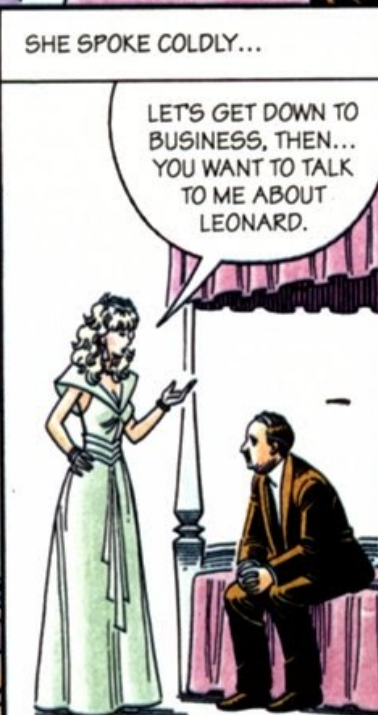
HIS EYES WERE FILLED WITH TEARS.

GEORGE SAT DOWN WEAKLY....



HE REMEMBERED AGAIN THE WORDS THEY HAD READ SO OFTEN IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS:

"Behold, thou art fair, my love;
Behold thou art fair:
Thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks...
Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy speech is comely...
Thy two breasts are like two young roes
That are twins,
That feed among the lilies...
There is no spot in thee."



SHE WASN'T SMILING...

WHY DID YOU COME TO SEE ME? WASN'T IT ABOUT LEONARD? YOU KNOW I LOVE HIM, DON'T YOU?

STOP IT!

HE PUT HIS HANDS TO HIS EARS.

YOU KNOW, I SPEND ALL OF MY TIME WITH HIM NOW. REMEMBER THE PICNIC GREEN ON MOUNT VERDE WHERE YOU AND I USED TO GO? WE WERE THERE LAST WEEK. WE FLEW TO ATHENS A MONTH AGO, WITH A CASE OF CHAMPAGNE.

SHE KEPT AT HIM...

YOU'RE NOT GUILTY... YOU'RE NOT HER! YOU HAVEN'T DONE WHAT SHE'S DONE... SHE'S GUILTY, NOT YOU!

HE GRABBED HER AND SHOOK...

LOOK, ISN'T THERE SOME WAY, CAN'T I -- PAY MORE MONEY? TAKE YOU AWAY WITH ME? WE'LL GO TO PARIS OR STOCKHOLM OR WHEREVER YOU LIKE!

THE MARIONETTES ONLY RENT, THEY NEVER SELL. IT WAS TRIED, LONG AGO. IT LEADS TO INSANITY. EVEN THIS MUCH IS ILLEGAL...

ON THE CONTRARY... I AM HER! I CAN ACT ONLY AS SHE ACTS. I DID ALL THOSE THINGS... I MADE LOVE TO HIM...

ALL I WANT IS TO LIVE WITH YOU, KATIE!

ENOUGH OF THIS -- I WARNED YOU, WE MUSTN'T SPEAK OF THESE THINGS. YOU'LL FEEL FRUSTRATED WHEN YOU LEAVE. YOU PAID YOUR MONEY, NOW DO WHAT YOU CAME TO DO.

ONE PART OF YOU DOES. YOU'RE WALLING IT IN, TRYING NOT TO LET IT OUT!

THAT CAN NEVER BE, BECAUSE I AM KATIE. ANYWAY, MARIONETTES CAN'T LEAVE THE PREMISES... WE MIGHT BE DISCOVERED OR DISSECTED.

BUT, I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU!

I'M AN OLD FOOL. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME.



I'M GOING TO SEE LEONARD TONIGHT.

DON'T TALK.



HE TOOK THE GUN FROM HIS POCKET...

WE'RE FLYING TO PARIS IN THE MORNING...

YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID.

SHE LAUGHED AND CARESSSED HIS CHIN...



...AND THEN ON TO STOCKHOLM, MY LITTLE FAT MAN!

SOMETHING BEGINS TO STIR IN HIM... THE HIDDEN REVULSION AND HATRED IN HIM WERE SENDING OUT THEIR FIRST FAINT PULSES. SHE FELT THEM, SOMEHOW, IN HER LOVELY CLOCKWORK HEAD, AND FANNED THE FLAMES...



PLUMP, ODD LITTLE MAN, WHO ONCE WAS SO FAIR...

DON'T!



HE RAISED THE GUN BLINDLY...

OLD WHILE I AM ONLY THIRTY ONE. AH, GEORGE, YOU WERE BLIND, WORKING ALL THOSE YEARS FOR ME... DON'T YOU THINK LEONARD IS LOVELY?

KATIE...

SHE RECITED SOFTLY...



"His head is as the most fine gold...
His locks are bushy, and black as a raven...
His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl..."

KATIE, DON'T!

HOW COULD SHE SPEAK THOSE WORDS? THEY WERE IN HIS MIND... HOW COULD SHE REMEMBER THEM...?



KATIE, DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS!

"His cheeks are as a bed of spices...
His belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires...
His legs are as pillars of marble..."



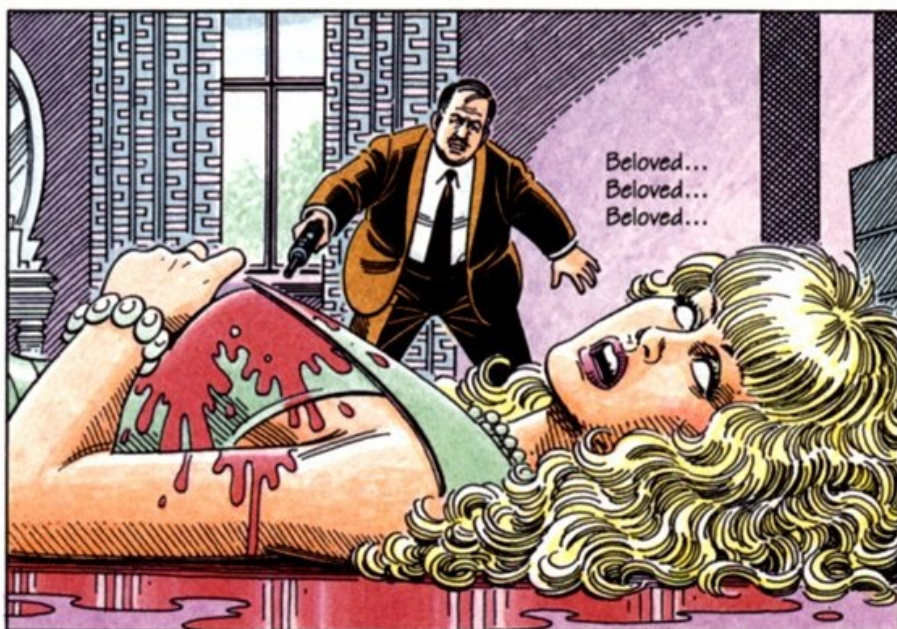
SHE FELL.

FOUR MORE TIMES HE PUMPED BULLETS INTO HER BODY...



SHE LAY SHUDDERING, SOME INSANELY WARPED MECHANISM CAUSING HER TO REPEAT AGAIN AND AGAIN...

AS THE GUN SLIPPED FROM HIS NERVELESS FINGERS, GEORGE HILL FAINTED.



HE AWAKENED TO A COOL CLOTH ON HIS BROW...



GEORGE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS HANDS. THE LAST THING HE REMEMBERED AFTER HE FELL WAS THE BLOOD... HER BLOOD...POURING OVER THEM. NOW THEY WERE CLEAN...



I'LL GO TO PARIS NOW, START OVER, I'M NOT TO TRY TO SEE KATIE AGAIN, AM I?

KATIE IS DEAD.



GOD, THE BLOOD... IT WAS REAL!

WE ARE PROUD OF THAT TOUCH.



HE WENT DOWN THE ELEVATOR TO THE STREET, IT WAS RAINING, AND HE WANTED TO WALK FOR HOURS. THE ANGER AND DESTRUCTION WERE PURGED AWAY. THE MEMORY WAS SO TERRIBLE HE WOULD NEVER WANT TO KILL AGAIN. SHE WAS DEAD NOW. THE RAIN FELL COOL ON HIS FACE.



THE MARIONETTES' FUNCTION WAS TO PREVENT ACTUAL CRIME. IF YOU NEEDED TO KILL, TORTURE, OR HIT SOMEONE, YOU TOOK IT OUT ON ONE OF THEM. HE COULDN'T GO BACK TO ME APARTMENT NOW...SHE MIGHT BE THERE. HE WANTED TO THINK OF HER AS DEAD...



A MANACLE WAS SLIPPED OVER HIS WRIST...



YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!

FOR MURDER... YES WE CAN!



A CLAP OF THUNDER SPLIT THE MURKY SKY...

IT WAS EIGHT-FIFTEEN AT NIGHT. IT HAD BEEN RAINING NOW FOR TEN DAYS, STREAMING DOWN THE GREY PRISON WALLS OUTSIDE. A DOOR CLANGED BEHIND HIM AND GEORGE DID NOT MOVE, BUT STOOD THERE AT THE WINDOW, STARING...



HIS LAWYER LOOKED UP AT HIM FROM HIS SEAT BY THE DOOR...

IT'S ALL OVER...YOU'LL BE EXECUTED TONIGHT AT TWELVE.

BUT, SHE WASN'T REAL! I DIDN'T KILL HER!



IT'S THE LAW, ANYHOW. YOU REMEMBER. THE OTHERS ARE SENTENCED, TOO. THE PRESIDENT OF MARIONETTES, INC. WILL DIE AT TWELVE THIRTY. HIS THREE ASSISTANTS WILL GO AT ONE.

THANKS...YOU DID ALL YOU COULD. I GUESS IT WAS MURDER, IMAGE OR NOT. THE IDEA WAS THERE, THE PLAN WAS THERE...IT LACKED ONLY THE REAL KATIE HERSELF.

IT'S A MATTER OF TIMING, TOO... TEN YEARS AGO OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN DEATH. THEY NEEDED AN OBJECT LESSON... A WHIPPING BOY.



THE USE OF MARIONETTES HAS GROWN SO MUCH IN THE LAST YEAR IT'S FANTASTIC. THE PUBLIC MUST BE SCARED OUT OF IT, AND SCARED **BADLY**...

YOU KNOW, THE GOVERNMENT'S RIGHT...I SEE THAT NOW. THEY CAN'T LET MURDER BE LEGAL, EVEN IF IT'S DONE WITH **ROBOTS**.

ARE THE ROBOTS ALIVE OR DEAD? ...WHERE DOES LIFE BEGIN OR END? YOU KNOW, THEY JUST PASSED THAT "LIVE ROBOT" LAW. IT'S JUST **BAD TIMING**, THAT'S ALL.

IT WAS A CRIME... I'VE FELT GUILTY EVER SINCE, FELT THE NEED OF PUNISHMENT... ISN'T THAT ODD?





THE DOOR SHUT. GEORGE STARED OUT AT THE RAIN, HIS HANDS TWISTING TOGETHER. SUDDENLY, A RED LIGHT BURNED IN THE WALL...A VOICE CAME OVER THE INTERCOM...



GEORGE GRIPPED THE BARS...

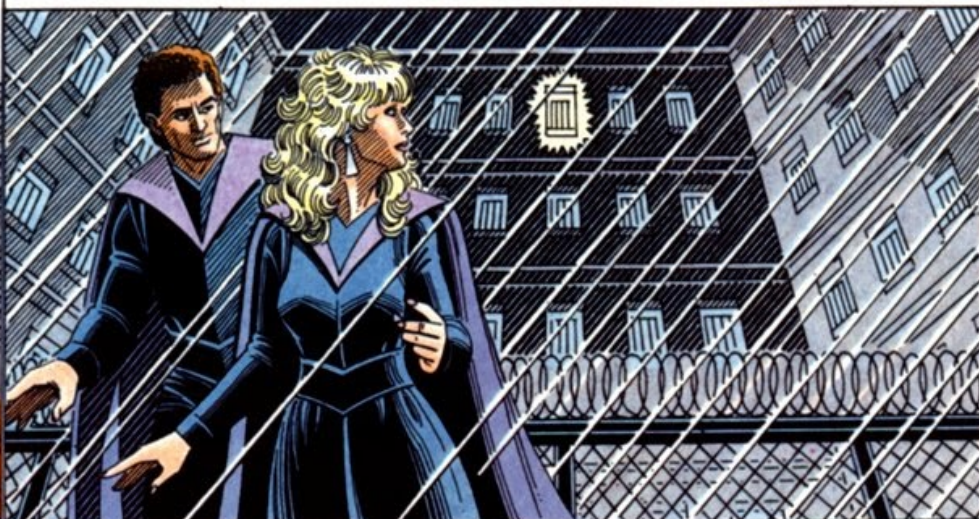


THE RED LIGHT WINKED OFF...LIGHTNING FLASHED IN THE SKY AND LIT HIS FACE. HE PRESSED HIS BURNING FOREHEAD TO THE COLD BARS, STARING, WAITING...



AFTER A LONG TIME, A DOOR OPENED SOMEWHERE BELOW. HE SAW TWO CAPED FIGURES EMERGE FROM THE PRISON, CROSSING THE COURTYARD...

UNDER AN ARC LIGHT, THEY PAUSED BRIEFLY AND ONE OF THEM GLANCED UP...

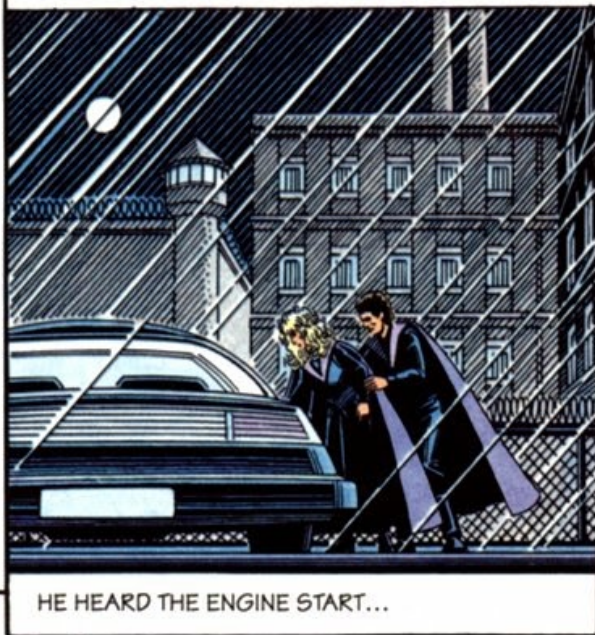


IT WAS KATIE, AND BESIDE HER LEONARD PHELPS.

VAINLY, HE SHOUTED THROUGH THE BARRED AND SEALED WINDOW...

HER FACE TURNED AWAY. THE MAN TOOK HER ARM AND THEY HURRIED THROUGH THE BLACK RAIN INTO A LOW CAR...

HE WRENCHED AT THE BARS, BEATING AT THE CONCRETE LEDGE WITH HIS FISTS...



HE HEARD THE ENGINE START...



THE GUARDS CAME RUNNING...

THE CAR DROVE AWAY, WITH LEONARD AND KATIE INSIDE IT. AWAY TO PARIS AND LONDON AND VENICE IN THE SPRING, STOCKHOLM IN THE SUMMER AND VIENNA IN THE FALL...

SHE'S NOT DEAD! I SAW HER! NOW YOU CAN LET ME OUT! I DIDN'T MURDER ANYONE...IT'S ALL A MISTAKE! I SAW HER!

WE SAW HER TOO, SIR...WE WENT THROUGH ALL THAT AT THE TRIAL!

KATIE, COME BACK! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!



BEHIND HIM, THE GUARDS MOVED TO TAKE HOLD OF HIM AS HIS SCREAMS ECHOED IN THE CONCRETE CELL...

A PIECE OF WOOD

Adapted by Mark Chiarello

There has hardly been a day since I was
fourteen, when I realized that a large black
bulldog named War might come, grab,
chew and kill me, I haven't thought how
wonderful if some year someone invented a
laser-beam of some sort that would make
all the weapons of the world fall apart.
From that old dream and desire, as a terri-
fied child, came its enactment as a story in
A PIECE OF WOOD.

Ray



"SIT DOWN, YOUNG MAN."

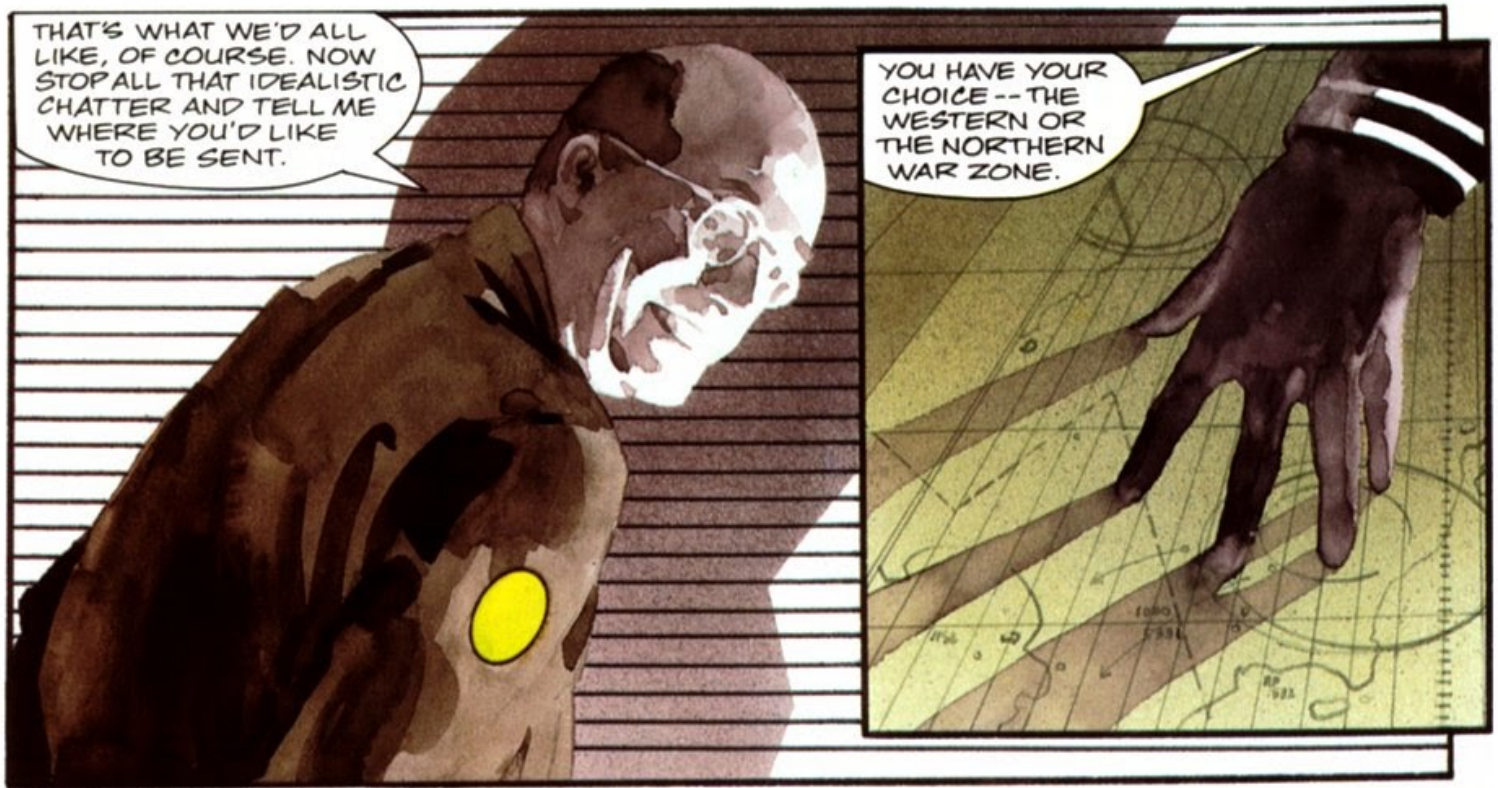
THANKS.

I'VE
BEEN HEARING
RUMORS
ABOUT YOU.

YOU'RE NOT
GETTING ON SO
WELL. SEVERAL
MONTHS NOW
I'VE HEARD ABOUT
YOU, AND I
THOUGHT I'D CALL
YOU IN. THOUGHT
MAYBE YOU'D
LIKE YOUR JOB
CHANGED.

A PIECE OF WOOD



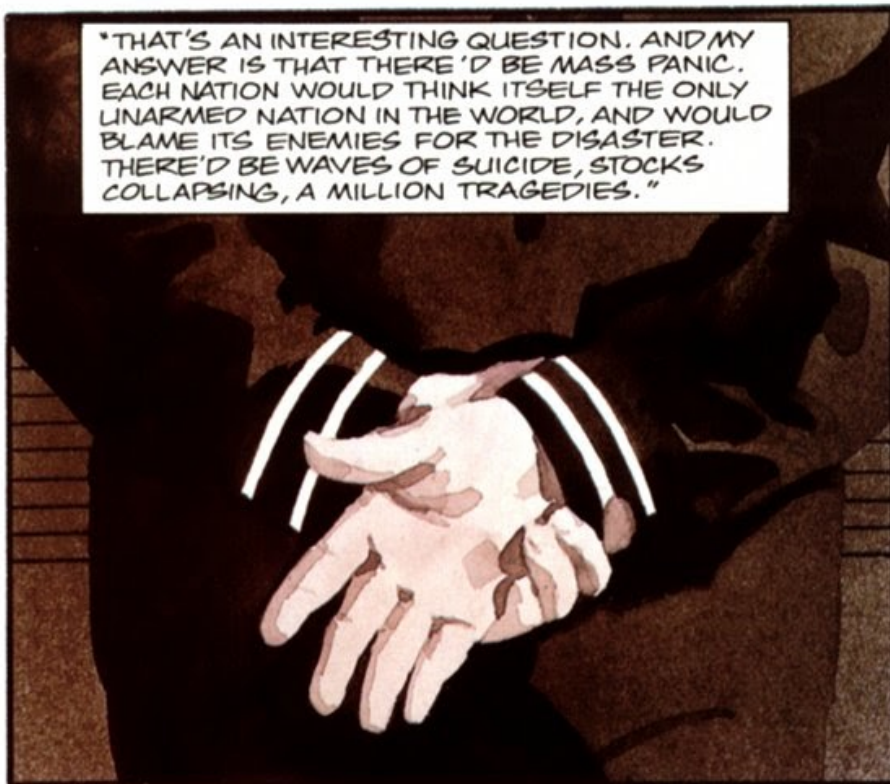


THAT'S WHAT WE'D ALL LIKE, OF COURSE. NOW STOP ALL THAT IDEALISTIC CHATTER AND TELL ME WHERE YOU'D LIKE TO BE SENT.

YOU HAVE YOUR CHOICE -- THE WESTERN OR THE NORTHERN WAR ZONE.



WHAT WOULD YOU OFFICERS DO, WHAT WOULD THE WORLD DO IF WE ALL WOKE TOMORROW WITH THE GUNS IN FLAKING RUIN ?



"THAT'S AN INTERESTING QUESTION. AND MY ANSWER IS THAT THERE'D BE MASS PANIC. EACH NATION WOULD THINK ITSELF THE ONLY UNARMED NATION IN THE WORLD, AND WOULD BLAME ITS ENEMIES FOR THE DISASTER. THERE'D BE WAVES OF SUICIDE, STOCKS COLLAPSING, A MILLION TRAGEDIES."

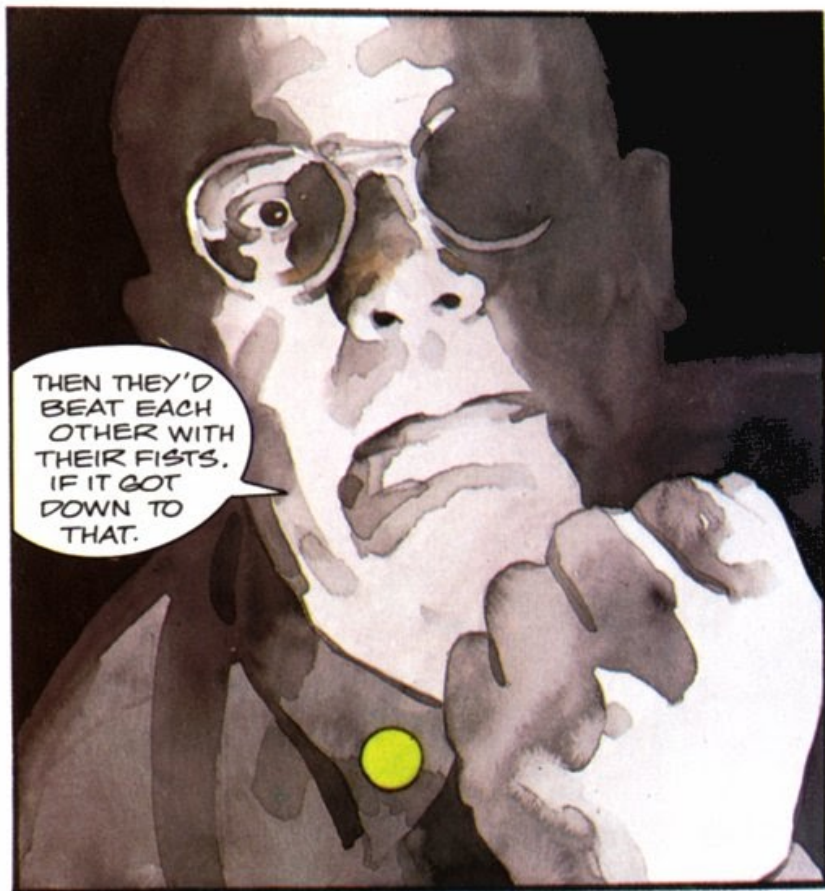


BUT AFTER THAT, AFTER THEY REALIZED IT WAS TRUE, AND THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO FEAR. IF WE WERE ALL TO START OVER FRESH AND NEW, WHAT THEN ?



THEY'D REARM
AS SWIFTLY
AS
POSSIBLE.

WHAT
IF THEY
COULD
BE
STOPPED
?



THEN THEY'D
BEAT EACH
OTHER WITH
THEIR FISTS.
IF IT GOT
DOWN TO
THAT.



"HUGE ARMIES OF MEN WITH BOXING
GLOVES WITH STEEL SPIKES WOULD
GATHER AT THE NATIONAL BORDERS.
AND IF YOU TOOK THE GLOVES AWAY
THEY'D USE THEIR FINGERNAILS
AND FEET.



"AND IF YOU CUT THEIR LEGS OFF
THEY'D SPIT ON EACH OTHER.
THEY'D FILL THE ATMOSPHERE SO
FULL OF HATE THAT MOSQUITOES
WOULD DROP TO THE GROUND
AND BIRDS WOULD FALL DEAD
FROM TELEPHONE WIRES."

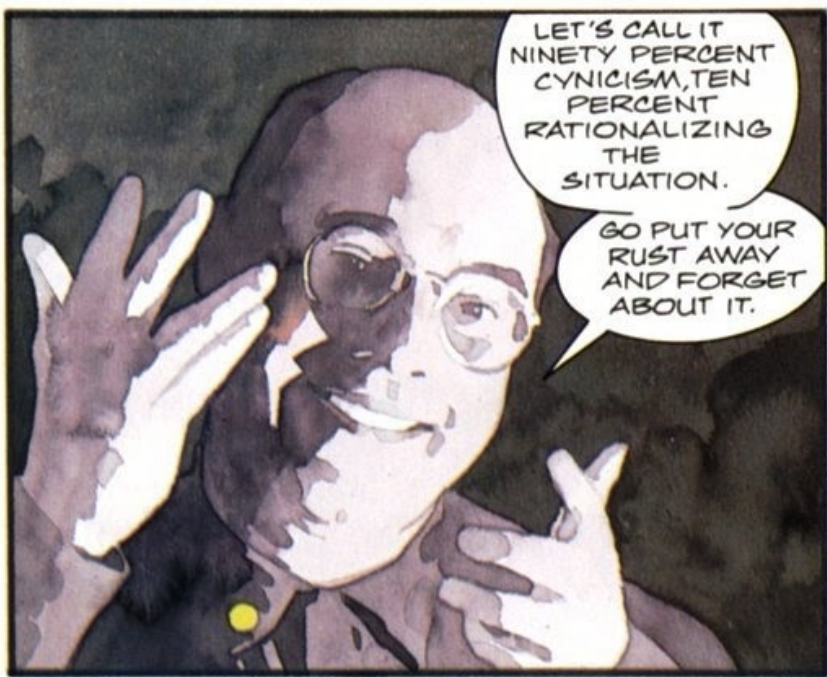


THEN
YOU DON'T
THINK IT
WOULD DO ANY
GOOD ?

CERTAINLY
NOT. IT'D BE LIKE
RIPPING THE CARAPACE
OFF A TURTLE.
CIVILIZATION WOULD
GASP AND DIE FROM
THE SHOCK.



"OR ARE YOU LYING TO YOURSELF
AND ME BECAUSE YOU'VE A NICE,
COMFORTABLE JOB ?"



LET'S CALL IT
NINETY PERCENT
CYNICISM, TEN
PERCENT
RATIONALIZING
THE
SITUATION.

GO PUT YOUR
RUST AWAY
AND FORGET
ABOUT IT.



HOW'D
YOU KNOW
I HAD
IT ?



"I'VE WORKED ON THIS PROJECT FOR A LONG TIME. IT'S BEEN A DREAM OF MINE. I WAS LOOKING FOR AN IMBALANCE FACTOR, I MAJORED IN PHYSICS AND METALLURGY, YOU KNOW.

$H = 1.0079$
 $(256.098) \rightarrow Zn$
 $\pi KE = \frac{1}{2}mv^2 = 0$
 $n = \infty$
Fe
Mg
Co
Al

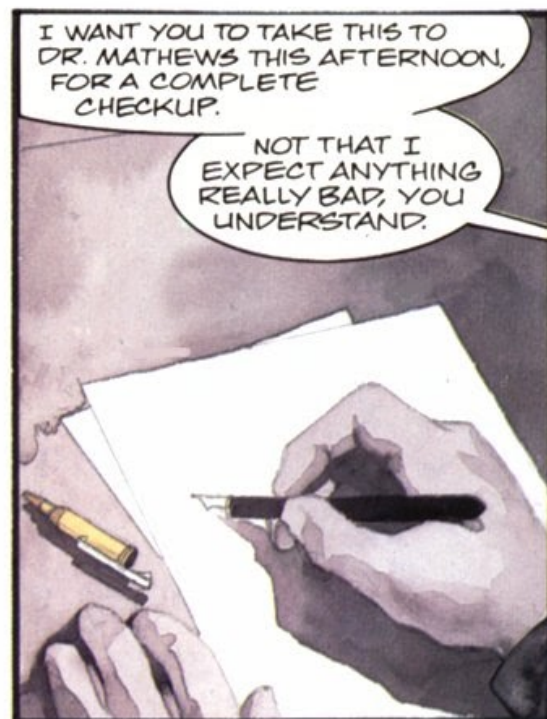
"IT CAME TO ME, THERE'S A RUST FACTOR IN THE AIR ALL THE TIME -- WATER VAPOR. I HAD TO FIND A WAY TO GIVE STEEL A 'NERVOUS BREAKDOWN'. THEN THE WATER VAPOR EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD WOULD TAKE OVER."

NOT ON ALL METAL, OF COURSE. I'D JUST ELIMINATE GUNS AND SHELLS, TANKS, PLANES, BATTLESHIPS. I CAN SET THE MACHINE TO WORK ON COPPER AND BRASS AND ALUMINUM, TOO, IF NECESSARY. I'D JUST WALK BY ALL OF THOSE WEAPONS AND, JUST BEING NEAR THEM, I'D MAKE THEM FALL AWAY.

MAY I ASK YOU A QUESTION?

YES.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT YOU WERE CHRIST?



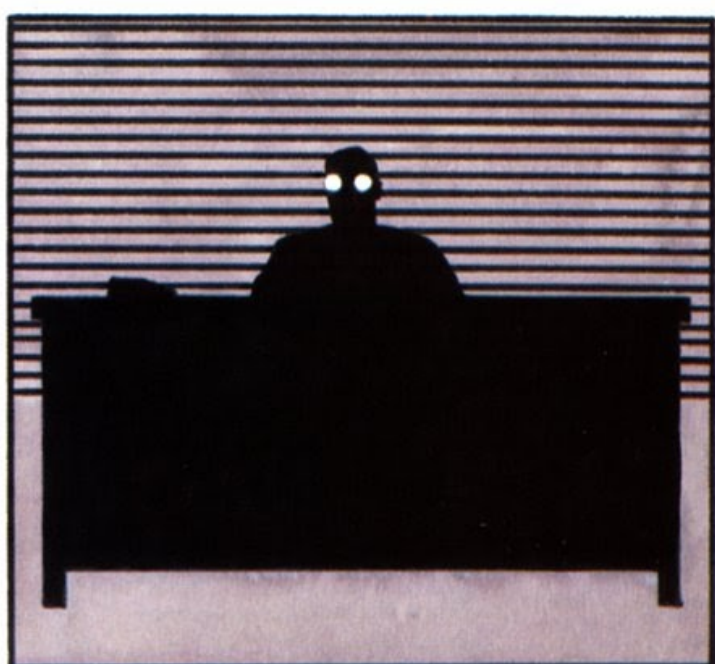
I DON'T KNOW HOW
I FOUND THIS INVENTION. IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE. JUST AS IMPOSSI-
BLE AS THE ATOM BOMB. I'VE
WAITED A MONTH NOW, TRYING
TO THINK IT OVER. I WORRIED
ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN,
BUT NOW I'VE JUST
ABOUT DECIDED.

MY TALK WITH YOU
HAS HELPED CLARIFY
THINGS. NOBODY THOUGHT
AN AIRPLANE WOULD EVER
FLY, NOBODY THOUGHT AN
ATOM WOULD EVER EXPLODE,
AND NOBODY THINKS THAT
THERE CAN EVER BE
PEACE.

...BUT
THERE
WILL
BE.







OUT THERE EVEN NOW--HE DIDN'T HAVE TO LOOK, NO ONE HAD TO TELL HIM--THE HANGARS WERE DUSTING DOWN IN SOFT, RED DUST, AND THE AIRPLANES WERE BLOWING AWAY ON A RUST-BROWN WIND INTO NOTHINGNESS, AND THE TANKS WERE SINKING INTO THE HOT ASPHALT ROADS, LIKE DINOSAURS SINKING INTO PRIMORDIAL TAR PITS.



LISTEN, LISTEN! GO AFTER HIM, GET HIM, WITH YOUR HANDS, CHOKE HIM, WITH YOUR FISTS, BEAT HIM, USE YOUR FEET, KICK HIS RIBS IN, KICK HIM TO DEATH, DO ANYTHING, BUT GET THAT MAN! I'LL BE RIGHT OUT!



IT'S WOOD, HE THOUGHT. GOOD OLD-FASHIONED WOOD. GOOD OLD-FASHIONED MAPLE.



A SPECIAL E.C. COMICS RAY BRADBURY CLASSIC

Illustrated By Bernard Krigstein
Newly Colored By Heather Brown

This story is based on an actual event, or what I took to be an actual event when I read a short article about it forty years ago. It appears that there actually was a young man in China some four hundred or so years back who rigged up some sort of bamboo and silk apparatus to strap on his arms and shoulders and then dare to fly up on some convenient wind. Unfortunately for him and the history of aviation, there was an emperor nearby who, seeing his joyful flight, ordered him executed and his wings destroyed. Only many hundreds of years later did the Wright Brothers stop repairing bicycles to soar over Kitty Hawk. In any event, within two hours after reading the short article about that hapless Chinese aviator, I finished and sent off to my publisher this story, THE FLYING MACHINE.

RAY

The FLYING MACHINE

IN THE YEAR A.D. 400, THE EMPEROR YUAN HELD HIS THRONE BY THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA, AND THE LAND WAS GREEN WITH RAIN, READYING ITSELF TOWARD THE HARVEST, AT PEACE, THE PEOPLE IN HIS DOMINATION NEITHER TOO HAPPY NOR TOO SAD. EARLY ON THE MORNING OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST WEEK OF THE SECOND MONTH OF THE NEW YEAR, THE EMPEROR YUAN WAS SIPPING TEA AND FANNING HIMSELF AGAINST A WARM BREEZE WHEN A SERVANT RAN ACROSS THE SCARLET AND BLUE GARDEN TILES, CALLING...

OH, EMPEROR, EMPEROR,
A MIRACLE!

YES, THE AIR *IS* SWEET THIS MORNING.



THE SERVANT SHOOK HIS HEAD,
BOWING QUICKLY...

NO, NO, A
MIRACLE!

AND THIS TEA
IS GOOD IN MY
MOUTH. SURELY
THAT IS A MIRACLE.

NO, NO,
YOUR
EXCELLENCY

LET ME GUESS, THEN.
ER... THE *SUN* HAS
RISEN AND A *NEW*
DAY IS UPON US. OR
THE *SEA* IS *BLUE*.
THAT, NOW, IS THE
FINEST OF *ALL*
MIRACLES.

EXCELLENCY, A
MAN IS FLYING!

WHAT?



THE EMPEROR STOPPED HIS FAN...

I **SAW** HIM IN THE **AIR**, A **MAN** FLYING WITH **WINGS**. I HEARD A **VOICE** CALL OUT OF THE SKY, AND WHEN I LOOKED **UP**, THERE HE **WAS**, A **DRAGON** IN THE HEAVENS WITH A **MAN** IN ITS MOUTH, A DRAGON OF **PAPER** AND **BAMBOO**, COLORED LIKE THE **SUN** AND THE **GRASS**.



IT IS **EARLY**, AND YOU HAVE JUST WAKENED FROM A **DREAM**.

IT IS **EARLY**, BUT I HAVE **SEEN** WHAT I HAVE **SEEN**! COME, AND YOU WILL SEE IT, **TOO**.



SIT DOWN WITH ME HERE. DRINK SOME **TEA**. IT MUST BE A **STRANGE** THING, IF IT IS **TRUE**, TO SEE A **MAN FLY**. YOU **MUST** HAVE TIME TO **THINK** OF IT, EVEN AS I MUST HAVE TIME TO **PREPARE MYSELF** FOR THE **SIGHT**.

THEY DRANK TEA. THE EMPEROR ROSE THOUGHTFULLY AS THE SERVANT PLEADED...



PLEASE. OR HE WILL BE **GONE**.

NOW YOU MAY SHOW ME WHAT YOU HAVE **SEEN**.

THEY WALKED INTO A GARDEN, ACROSS A MEADOW OF GRASS, OVER A SMALL BRIDGE, THROUGH A GROVE OF TREES, AND UP A TINY HILL...



THERE!

THE EMPEROR LOOKED INTO THE SKY...

AND IN THE SKY, LAUGHING SO HIGH THAT YOU COULD HARDLY HEAR HIM LAUGH, WAS A MAN; AND THE MAN WAS CLOTHED IN BRIGHT PAPERS AND REEDS TO MAKE WINGS AND A BEAUTIFUL YELLOW TAIL, AND HE WAS SOARING ALL ABOUT LIKE THE LARGEST BIRD IN A UNIVERSE OF BIRDS, LIKE A NEW DRAGON IN A LAND OF ANCIENT DRAGONS...



I FLY! I FLY!

YES! YES...

THE EMPEROR YUAN DID NOT MOVE. INSTEAD HE LOOKED AT THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA NOW TAKING SHAPE OUT OF THE FARTHEST MIST IN THE GREEN HILLS, THAT WONDERFUL WALL WHICH HAD PROTECTED THEM FOR A TIMELESS TIME FROM ENEMY HORDES AND PRESERVED PEACE FOR YEARS WITHOUT NUMBER...



TELL ME, HAS ANYONE **ELSE** SEEN THIS FLYING MAN?

I AM THE **ONLY ONE** EXCELLENCY.

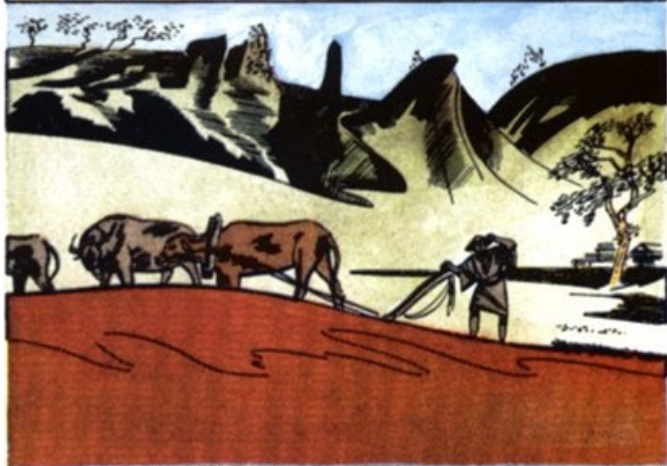
THE EMPEROR WATCHED THE HEAVENS ANOTHER MINUTE AND THEN SAID...



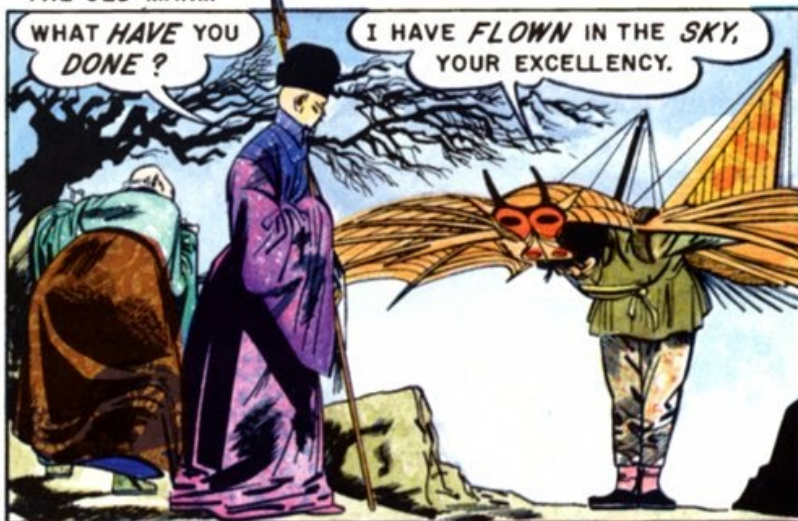
CALL HIM **DOWN** TO ME.

HO, COME DOWN, COME DOWN! THE EMPEROR WISHES TO SEE YOU!

THE EMPEROR GLANCED IN ALL DIRECTIONS WHILE THE FLYING MAN SOARED DOWN THE MORNING WIND. HE SAW A FARMER, EARLY IN HIS FIELDS, WATCHING THE SKY, AND HE NOTED WHERE THE FARMER STOOD...

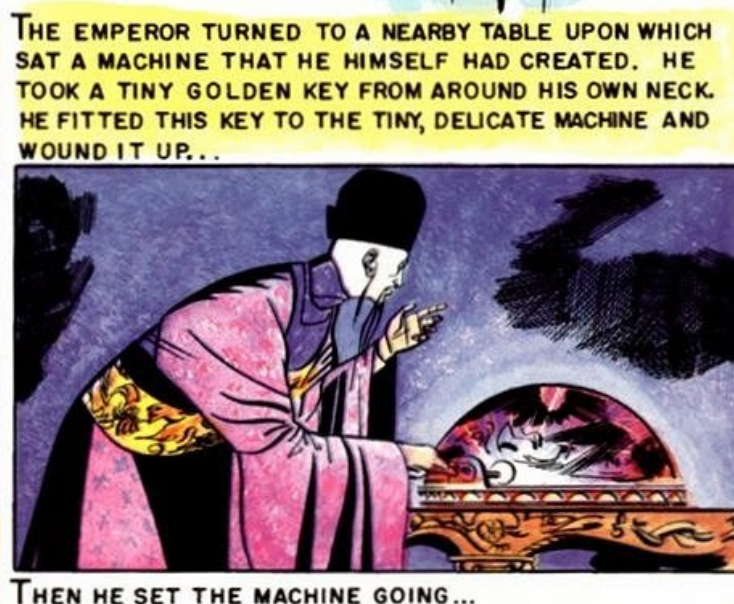
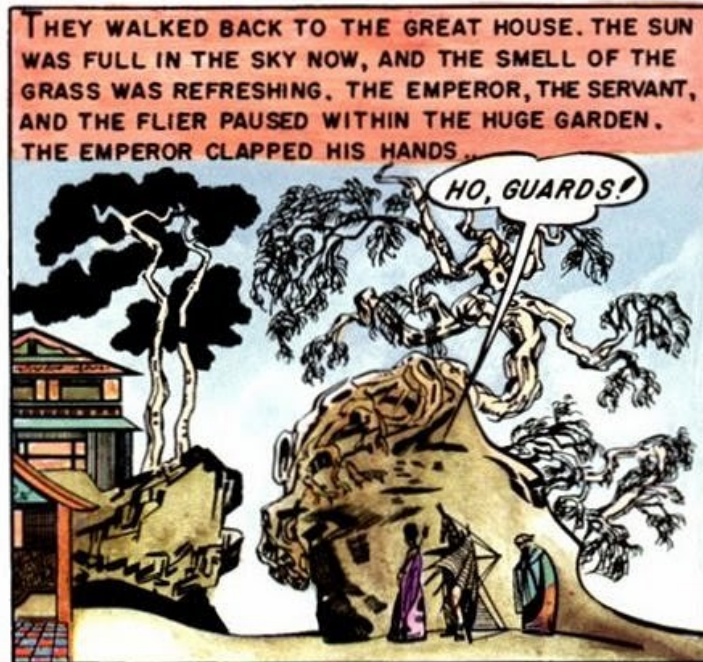
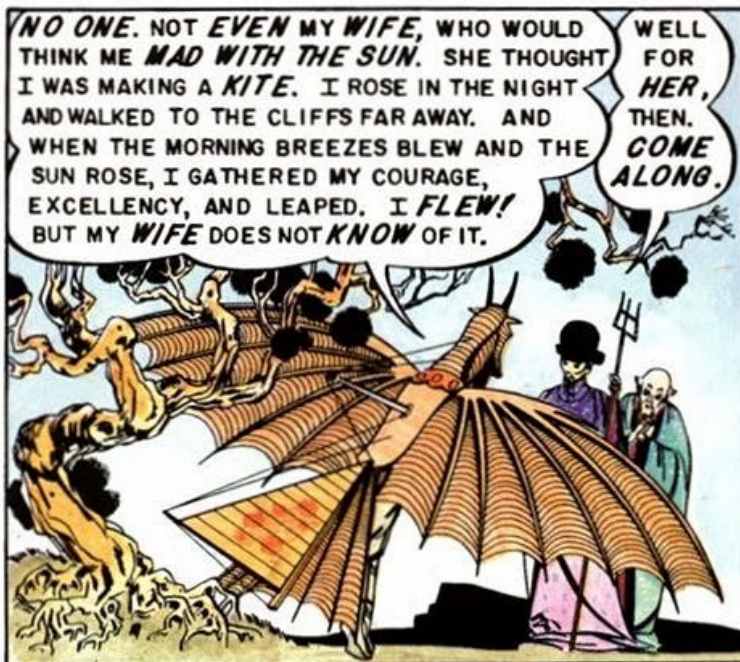


THE FLYING MAN ALIT WITH A RUSTLE OF PAPER AND A CREAK OF BAMBOO REEDS. HE CAME PROUDLY TO THE EMPEROR, CLUMSY IN HIS RIG, AT LAST BOWING BEFORE THE OLD MAN...



THE EMPEROR REACHED OUT A THIN HAND TO TOUCH THE PRETTY PAPER AND THE BIRDLIKE KEEL OF THE APPARATUS. IT SMELLED COOL, OF THE WIND...





THEN HE SET THE MACHINE GOING...

THE MACHINE WAS A GARDEN OF METAL AND JEWELS. SET IN MOTION, BIRDS SANG IN TINY METAL TREES, WOLVES WALKED THROUGH MINIATURE FORESTS, AND TINY PEOPLE RAN IN AND OUT OF SUN AND SHADOW, FANNING THEMSELVES WITH MINIATURE FANS, LISTENING TO THE TINY EMERALD BIRDS, AND STANDING BY IMPOSSIBLY SMALL BUT TINKLING FOUNTAINS...



THE EMPEROR SAID...

IS IT NOT BEAUTIFUL? IF YOU ASKED ME WHAT I HAVE DONE HERE, I COULD ANSWER YOU WELL. I HAVE MADE BIRDS SING, I HAVE MADE FORESTS MURMUR, I HAVE SET PEOPLE TO WALKING IN THIS WOODLAND, ENJOYING THE LEAVES AND SHADOWS AND SONGS. THAT IS WHAT I HAVE DONE.



THE FLIER, ON HIS KNEES, THE TEARS POURING DOWN HIS FACE, PLEADED...

BUT I HAVE DONE A SIMILAR THING! I HAVE FOUND BEAUTY. I HAVE FLOWN ON THE MORNING WIND. I HAVE LOOKED DOWN ON ALL THE SLEEPING HOUSES AND GARDENS. I HAVE SMELLED THE SEA AND EVEN SEEN IT, BEYOND THE HILLS, FROM MY HIGH PLACE. AND I HAVE SOARED LIKE A BIRD. OH, I CANNOT SAY HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS UP THERE, IN THE SKY, WITH THE WIND ABOUT ME, BLOWING ME LIKE A FEATHER. THAT IS BEAUTIFUL, EMPEROR, THAT IS BEAUTIFUL, TOO!



YES. I KNOW IT MUST BE TRUE. FOR I FELT MY HEART MOVE WITH YOU IN THE AIR AND I WONDERED: WHAT IS IT LIKE? HOW DOES IT FEEL? HOW DO THE DISTANT POOLS LOOK FROM SO HIGH? AND HOW MY HOUSES AND SERVANTS? LIKE ANTS? AND HOW THE DISTANT TOWNS, NOT YET AWAKE?



THEN SPARE ME!

BUT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN ONE MUST LOSE A LITTLE BEAUTY IF ONE IS TO KEEP WHAT LITTLE BEAUTY ONE ALREADY HAS. I DO NOT FEAR YOU, YOURSELF, BUT I FEAR ANOTHER MAN.



WHAT MAN?

SOME OTHER MAN WHO, SEEING YOU, WILL BUILD A THING OF BRIGHT PAPERS AND BAMBOO LIKE THIS. BUT THE OTHER MAN WILL HAVE AN EVIL FACE AND AN EVIL HEART, AND THE BEAUTY WILL BE GONE. IT IS THIS MAN I FEAR!



WHY? WHY?

WHO IS TO SAY THAT SOMEDAY JUST SUCH A MAN, IN JUST SUCH AN APPARATUS, MIGHT NOT FLY IN THE SKY AND DROP HUGE STONES UPON THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA?



NO ONE MOVED OR SAID A WORD...



THE EXECUTIONER WHIRLED HIS SILVER AX...



BURN THE KITE AND THE INVENTOR'S BODY AND BURY THEIR ASHES TOGETHER...



THE EMPEROR TURNED TO HIS SERVANT WHO HAD SEEN THE MAN FLYING...

HOLD YOUR *TONGUE*. IT WAS *ALL A DREAM*, A MOST *SORROWFUL* AND *BEAUTIFUL DREAM*. AND THAT *FARMER* IN THE DISTANT FIELD WHO *ALSO* SAW, TELL HIM IT WOULD *PAY* HIM TO *CONSIDER* IT *ONLY A VISION*. IF *EVER* THE *WORD* PASSES AROUND, *YOU AND THE FARMER DIE WITHIN THE HOUR*.



THE OLD MAN SAW, BEYOND THE GARDEN WALL, THE GUARDS BURNING THE BEAUTIFUL MACHINE OF PAPER AND REEDS THAT SMELLED OF MORNING WIND. HE SAW THE DARK SMOKE CLIMB INTO THE SKY...

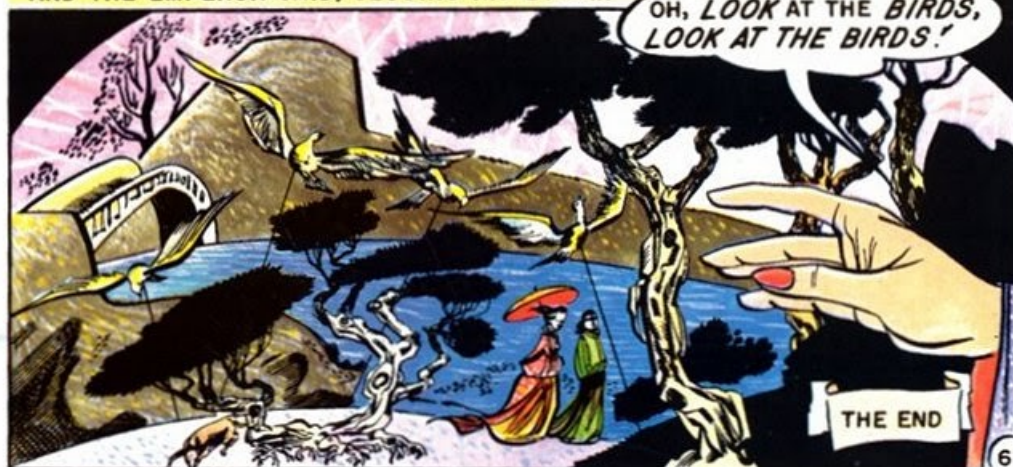


HE SAW THE GUARDS DIGGING A TINY PIT WHEREIN TO BURY THE ASHES...

WHAT IS THE LIFE OF *ONE* MAN AGAINST A *MILLION* OTHERS? I MUST TAKE *SOLACE* FROM THAT THOUGHT.



HE TOOK THE KEY FROM ITS CHAIN ABOUT HIS NECK AND ONCE MORE WOUND UP THE BEAUTIFUL MINATURE GARDEN. THE TINY GARDEN WHIRRED ITS HIDDEN AND DELICATE MACHINERY AND SET ITSELF INTO MOTION; TINY PEOPLE WALKED IN FORESTS, TINY FOXES LOPED THROUGH SUN-SPECKLED GLADES, AND AMONG THE TINY TREES FLEW LITTLE BITS OF HIGH SONG AND BRIGHT BLUE AND YELLOW COLOR, FLYING, FLYING, FLYING IN THAT SMALL SKY. AND THE EMPEROR SAID, CLOSING HIS EYES...



THE END

Heather Brown is an award winning Canadian designer/illustrator who has worked in the record industry, animation and publishing. Her passions are painting, writing, travel and physics. This is her first comic book work.

Mark Chiarello is at heart a New Yorker, but has recently moved to Boston. His watercolor illustrations can be seen in the "Stars of the Negro Leagues" baseball card set and the upcoming "Batman/Houdini" graphic novel for DC Comics.

Dave Gibbons has drawn and written for most major comics publishers on both sides of the Atlantic. His work has encompassed "Dr. Who," "Superman," the Hugo award-winning "Watchmen," and "Give Me Liberty."

Bruce Jensen, who illustrated the cover for this volume, is known for his science fiction and fantasy cover work. He has illustrated the covers for "The Missing Matter", "Alien Tongue", "Modular Man", and "Red Genesis" for Bantam Books; "The Ultimate Dracula", "The

Ultimate Frankenstein", and "The Ultimate Werewolf" for Dell; and "Isaac Asimov's Robots in Time" series for Avon books. In addition, Jensen illustrated the first volume of the graphic adaptation of William Gibson's "Neuromancer" for Marvel/Epic.

Hanne Kjeldgaard is a Danish artist now living in New York City. She has traveled extensively throughout Europe, Mexico, Central America and the United States.

The late Bernard Krigstein majored in art at Brooklyn College, set out to be a painter, and settled for working in comic books. He was EC's "fine artist," with his masterful storytelling, beautiful planned compositions and unusually thoughtful graphics. He left EC and the world of comics in 1955, and went on to become a commercial artist, teacher and painter.

Ralph Reese is a veteran illustrator and comics artist. He began as an assistant to the legendary Wally Wood. Later, he became a regular

contributor to "National Lampoon", drawing the continuing strips "One Year Affair" and "Two Year Affair". In 1977 he illustrated one of the first graphic novels, "The Son of Sherlock Holmes". More recently, Ralph was the illustrator of the continuing daily comic strip "Flash Gordon" for King Features.

James Sherman has done book, magazine and comics illustration. He was the main artist on DC's "Legion of Superheroes" title for two years. He also drew "The Challengers of the Unknown" for DC. For Marvel comics, Sherman has worked on "Alpha Flight", "Spider-Man", "X-Men", "The Punisher", and "The Silver Surfer". Sherman also designed and illustrated Joan Rivers' bestselling book, "The Life and Hard Times of Heidi Abromowitz".

Daniel Torres was born in Valencia, Spain, where he began his career as an illustrator. He is the creator of the comic characters Roco Vargas as well as an illustrator for *Esquire*, *Playboy*, *Premiere* and *Sports Illustrated*.

Executive Editor: Byron Preiss

Editor: Howard Zimmerman

Art Director/Designer: Dean Motter

Assistant Editor: Jessica Steinberg

Managing Editor: Sally Arbuthnot

Additional Lettering: Kurt Hathaway

Special Thanks to: Lou Aronica and Robert Simpson at Bantam Books, Don Congdon, Rafael Martinez, Vicente Campos, Richard Bruning, Rosana Ragusa, Veronica Carman, the folks at Sprintout and Uncle Ray.

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MARK CHIARELLO § What would you do if you developed a device that would eliminate all weapons from the world? Would you tell your boss, if you worked for the Army?

ISBN 0-553-35126-5



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